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**INDIAN CONQUEST  
OF THE  
HIMALAYAN TERRITORIES**

**Military Exploits of General Zorawar Singh Dogra**

*by*

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**To**

**My father**

**Th. Amar Singh Charak**

**who died in harness at Iskardu, the  
headquarters of Baltistan.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This account of the military campaigns of Gulab Singh and his general, Wazir Zorawar Singh Dogra, is the outcome of the inspiration received by me from Brigadier Ghansar Singh, who was the last Dogra Governor of Iskardu, the headquarters of Baltistan, at the time of Pakistani raid on Kashmir in 1947. Previously, also he has been a driving force in the compilation of my translation cum research work, *Gulabnama*. I ever remain grateful to his elderly advice and his keen interest in my Dogra studies.

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P. G. Dept. of History,  
University of Jammu,  
Basant Panchami, the  
12th January, 1978.

Sukhdev Singh Charak

## FOREWORD

The Dogras of Jammu region occupy an honourable place in the military annals of India. They are a warlike people who have persistently followed their traditional avocation of warfare for centuries and have won a place of pride among the martial races of India. They have nevertheless inherited a unique spirit of patriotism and readiness to die for the sake of country's defence. Their kings and warriors have fought against Mahmud and Timur, braved other foreign aggressions, participated dexterously in the game of politics during the supremacy of the Sayyids, and Durranis in the Punjab, and carved out for themselves an important place in Indian history.

Their martial and artistic achievements during the last three hundred years have particularly won them fair name and brought them to the footlights on the stage of India's cultural pageant. Their indomitable courage and bravery shone brightest in the battlefields of Egypt and the Middle East during the two world wars, and on the lofty plateau of Chushul and the staggering heights of Haji Pir, Tithwal and Iskardu during India's wars with China and Pakistan.

This martial spirit of the Dogras found its finest expression during the second quarter of the last century in the military enterprises of Wazir Zorawar Singh, who, according to A. H. Francke, was the greatest general the Dogras have ever had. He seems to have been an adept tactician in high-altitude warfare and fought with amazing success on the battlefields situated in snow-covered valleys and plateaus some 12,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea. From Kishtwar to Baltistan and Ladakh spreads the largest chain of the Himalayan mountains for hundreds of miles, across which he traversed to and fro several times at the head of his

forces, and his indefatigable spirit never faltered despite his want of knowledge of the geographical features of the region and the naturally protected position of Western Tibet. As he had an eye for the shortcomings of his enemy, and was a great strategist, all such difficulties were overcome.

He proved himself a true soldier by enduring extraordinary hardships and in setting an example of personal courage, and in the words of a critic "if he had not met an early end on the battlefield he might have impressed his name on the pages of the great history of the world". Like most of the great generals of the world he met disaster and death in the last battle of his life in Tibet, but his conquest of the mountainous regions of Kishtwar, Ladakh, Gilgit and a part of the Tibetan plateau, stands a monument to his martial prowess.

A study of the life and achievements of this great Dogra conqueror was a long-felt need which Shri Sukhdev Singh Charak has adequately fulfilled by presenting this monograph. He has successfully drawn attention of the scholars of Dogra history to the conquests of the Himalayan regions by this veteran general of Gulab Singh from 1834 to 1841. At that time Gulab Singh was an autonomous vassal of Lahore Kingdom, yet he was following an independent policy of territorial expansion towards the north and north-east of the Punjab and beyond. In this stupendous task Gulab Singh and Zorawar Singh were not unopposed. In addition to the seemingly insurmountable hurdles presented by the difficult mountainous terrain broken by abyssal gorges and deep-cut valleys, they had to face keen rivalries of the jealous courtiers of the Lahore Darbar and its governors in Kashmir and Kangra Hills. But above all, it was the British diplomacy which Gulab Singh had to combat diligently and with the subtle brand of statemanship he was reared in. The importance of this monograph lies in Shri Charak's successful revelation of the intricacies of British diplomacy which ran counter to Gulab Singh's Political ambition and Dogra interests. He has, from the study of

**original records, brought to light the real intentions of Gulab Singh's policy towards Tibet and exposed the craftiness of British diplomacy in thwarting Dogra expansion into this region.**

**I heartily welcome this interesting and revealing book and congratulate the author for its production.**

**J. D. Sharma,  
Vice Chancellor  
University of Jammu**

**Jammu, 15 September 1977.**

## INTRODUCTION

The conquest of Zanskar, Ladakh, Purig, Baltistan and Naris was several times attempted by Indian armies of the Sultans of Delhi and rulers of Kashmir with some success, but without permanent results. An abortive attempt at the conquest of these territories beyond the middle Himalayas is known to have been made by the Tughlaks during the fourteenth century. It was, however, left to the rulers of Kashmir and the aggressive Aurangzeb to accomplish that task to some extent and bring those countries in closer relationship with the Indian continent. A religious nearness, no doubt, had already been established as early as the time of Ashoka the great with the propagation of Buddhism beyond the Himalayas, in Khotan and Tibet. But the geographical conditions, the lofty spurs of the Himalayas, had always stood in the way of closer ties of the southern plains with the Ladakhi-Balti region which had remained in the past in more intimate political and cultural relations with the northern countries.

Ladakh and Baltistan had, throughout their known history, been rival principalities, mostly at war with, and occasionally subduing, each other. To the east, Ladakh had always been at war with Lhasa which sometimes imposed its sovereignty on Leh and spread even upto the Balti territories. In these struggles Ladakh sometimes expanded far into the western Tibet. It has always existed as a kingdom comprising territories of Guge, Zanskar, Lahul and Spiti, as well as Baltistan, before the last named country became converted to Islam. When during the 14th century, Islam became predominantly established in Kashmir and Baltistan, both these countries combined against the Buddhist Ladakh and led to frequent scuffles between the two neighbouring principalities.

The first attack on Baltistan by Kashmiri rulers, after the establishment of Muslim rule in the Valley, was made by Sultan Sikandar (1394-1416 A. D.) in about 1405, who not only conquered Baltistan, but also forcibly converted its Buddhist population to Islam. When the famous Kashmiri ruler, Zainul Abidin became Sultan (1420-1470 A. D.), he also led his conquering armies twice across

Baltistan and Ladakh. The first attack was not a serious one. But during the second raid the Kashmiri army conquered not only Ladakh, but also its dependencies, Lahul and Spiti, and even Kulu, and occupied the Tibetan province of Guge. Both these countries acknowledged Kashmiri suzerainty. But on Zainul Abiden's death Ladakhis deposed his minion Lo-tro-chok-den and became independent. Although King Hasan Khan (1472-84 A. D.) of Kashmir twice sent armies to reconquer Ladakh but these achieved nothing due to mutual dissensions.

However, the Mongol commander of Kashgar, Mirza Haider occupied Kashmir and conquered Ladakh and Baltistan also in about 1535 A. D. He devastated Nubra and forced the inhabitants to embrace Islam, and moved down to Leh where rulers of Ladakh waited on him with all the humility. When Mirza Haider withdrew to Kashmir, the people of Ladakh revolted. But the Mongols suppressed the rebellion and executed the Ladakhi King Tra-shi Namgyal. Ladakhis again revolted and were successful in reviving their independence till Mirza Haider again invaded Ladakh in 1545, and by 1548 he had once again occupied both Ladakh and Baltistan.

The Chak rulers of Kashmir, Haider and Ghazi Shah also led expeditions into Ladakh, but were repulsed badly, as Ladakh had grown strong under the rule of the second or Namgyal dynasty, which extended its sway even on Guge province of Western Tibet. The Ladakhi King Senge-Namgyal even reoccupied Purig which had been lost to Baltistan. But in doing so he came in conflict with the Mughals, and was compelled to renounce his claim over Purig.

Again, the Ladakhis invaded Baltistan during 1662 and conquered Khapalu and Chorbat which led the ruler of Skardo to beg assistance from his Mughal overlords. Aurangzeb visited Kashmir in 1663 and compelled the Ladakhi ruler to accept his terms under the threat of an invasion. The Ladakhi King not only agreed to pay a tribute, but also accepted striking of imperial coins and reading of Khutba in the name of the Mughal Emperor. Hardpressed by the Mongol-Tibetan attack in 1682 the Ladakhi King extricated himself from perils by the help of his Mughal overlords and in return had to accept Islam and adopt the Muhammadan title of Aqabat Mahmud Khan. Afterwards Ladakhis continued to pay tribute to the Mughal Governor of Kashmir for sometime which, however, had been discontinued before the Sikh conquest of Kashmir in A. D. 1819. Ranjit Singh had enforced tribute on Ladakh again in October 1820, and it appears that Tse-pal, King of Ladakh continued to pay a nominal tribute regularly to the



**Sikh Nazim of Kashmir upto 1834 when the Dogras invaded and conquered Ladakh and made it a part of their territory by successive conquests and integration.**

Although Ladakh and Baltistan had paid tribute intermittently to the rulers of Delhi and afterwards to Maharaja Ranjit Singh through their Governors of Kashmir, yet these territories were never considered a part of India or even of the Lahore Kingdom before their final conquest by the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh, who was then a vassal of the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore. He was a scion of the royal house of Jammu who were rulers of this principality for several centuries before the inception of Muslim rule in the Punjab. Maldev, Dhruv Dev and Ranjit Dev were great rulers of the once powerful Jammu Raj, which received the proud distinction of being called the "leader of the twenty-two principalities" between the Jehlum and the Bias during the latter's reign which spread from A. D. 1733 to 1782. Gulab Singh and his two brothers, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh, who later became the most powerful and influential grandees of Lahore Court, belonged to the younger branch of the ruling family of Jammu, being the great grandsons of Ranjit Dev's younger brother, Mian Surat Singh.

Jammu had been conquered by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore in 1808. Its ruler, Raja Jit Singh, grandson of Ranjit Dev and the last ruling chief of the elder branch, was deposed and Jammu was annexed to Lahore Kingdom in about 1816. But some six years before the event Gulab Singh had joined Ranjit's military service as a petty officer, where his younger brothers also followed him in a couple of years. All the three brothers and their father, Mian Kishor Singh became great favourites of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and won great distinctions from time to time on account of their joint assiduity. In 1818 Dhian Singh was made the Lord Chamberlain (Deodhiwala) by Ranjit Singh. In 1820 they received jagirs of Jammu, Bandralta, Chaneni and Kishtwar. In 1822, Gulab Singh was made hereditary Raja of Jammu, the Dogra capital for several centuries. Around Jammu Gulab Singh and his brothers, who were made Rajas of Bandralta-Samba and Chibhal in their turn, wove the web of political power with some distant and indistinct hope of reviving the Dogra Kingdom. Gulab Singh's acquisitions and conquests at least betray his secret motive of carving out a principality for himself on the dismemberment of Sikh Kingdom which was universally anticipated to take place very soon. As it has been pointed out by a shrewd observer, Gulab Singh made conquests obviously in the name of Ranjit Singh, but practically he extended his own principality; his conquests of the Himalayan Territories of Ladakh, Baltistan and their dependencies, as

well as his forward policy towards Tibet was a part of his wider politics. He has been blamed of extending his own possessions with Sikh means, and to play treachery. But the circumstances reveal in him a true statesman and an undaunted soldier who was more wedded to some worthwhile ideals than to mere treachery and tyranny. He had one ambition of consolidating the Dogra principality which had been built by his ancestors, and this he almost realised in the very life-time, and with the approval, of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The circumstances changed after the death of Ranjit Singh, and a new situation developed which resulted in the creation of Jammu and Kashmir State on the very lines already drawn by him. This shows his political sagacity.

However, the art of politics he practised is beyond the scope of this monograph, which concentrates on his conquests of the countries of the middle and the higher Himalayas. In achieving these conquests he was ably assisted by his great military commanders—General Zorawar Singh Dogra, Wazir Ratnu, Colonel Mehta Basti Ram, Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Lakhpat. General Zorawar Singh was, like his master Maharaja Gulab Singh, a true and honest soldier, quite humane and considerate and temperamentally chiselled for the martial business. Some enthusiasts of parochialism bring allegations of vandalism and tyranny against him without mentioning any battle of the past or present which was not attended by these evils. It goes to the credit of Zorawar Singh Dogra that his memory is cherished with love and respect in Ladakh and ballads of his favourite wife, Asha Devi, were sung in that land. The plunder of a monastery or two by some of his over-enthusiastic Balti Commanders, moved by iconoclastic zeal, does not prove the charge of vandalism on the General who was never swayed by the instinct of plunder and personally had no fancy for the glitter of the gold. The profession of arms was congenial to his nature, and like Gulab Singh himself, conquests of territories was dear to him. Both the general and his master incessantly planned and successfully executed their military operations achieving spectacular results. Their military campaigns across the lofty mountains and snow-covered high plateaus form an amazing chapter of India's martial annals.

## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	6
Foreword	7
Introduction	10
1. Chapter One : The Rise of the Durgaras and Traigartas	17
2. Chapter Two : Gulab Singh Dogra and Wazir Zorawar Singh Early Exploits	41
3. Chapter Three : In the heart of Himalayas and Beyond	54
4. Chapter Four : The Dogra Conquest of Ladakh	65
5. Chapter Five : Dogra Ladakhi Advance on Baltistan	89
6. Chapter Six : In the Land of Manasarovara and Mt. Kailash (Tibet)	103
7. Chapter Seven : The Great Reverse—Zorawar Singh's Last Struggle and Tibetan Offensive	127
8. Chapter Eight : Sino-Dogra Contest over Ladakh and the Peace Settlement	140
9. Chapter Nine : Shadow of Politics over Arms	164
10. Chapter Ten : Zorawar Singh and his Military System	182
Appendix A Copy of a British <i>Murasila</i> regarding repatriation of Dogra prisoner, 1857	189
Appendix B Minutes by the Lieutenant-Governor, North- West Province, 1841	191
Appendix C Translation of Treaty, 1842	195
Appendix D Translation of a Ladakhi song	197
Appendix E Bibliography	198
INDEX	204





## *The Rise of Durgaras (Dugar) and Traigartas (Kangra)*

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### **Durgaras**

The resplendent and graceful Dogras, with a tradition of chivalry of more than three thousand years, are among the finest of soldiers in the Indian army. The denizens of hills, they bring with them "the serenity of the Himalayas, the force of a mountain spring and a highly developed sense of discipline which nature imposes on men living at high altitude".<sup>1</sup> The Dogras have though a very fine tradition and have distinguished themselves in every engagement and battle that they have taken part in the course of their long history, yet their origin is shrouded in obscurity. This tribe possibly existed from the days of the Gupta or pre-Gupta age, but their first documentary evidence was recorded during the eleventh century on two copper-plate title-deeds in Chamba, issued, first by Soma-Varman, and the second by Soma and Asata, rulers of Chamba, which date from 1056-66 A.D. These copper-plate documents laud the achievements of the great king of Chamba, Sahila-Varman, 920-940 A.D., and refer to "the Lord of Durgara". The inscription reads that Sahila Varman "was a fresh cloud to extinguish in a moment the mighty blazing fire of the Kira forces, fanned as by the Lord of Durgara, assisted by the Saumatika, whose army was manifestly crushed by the fearful frown on his brow".<sup>2</sup>

This refers to an attack on Chamba by the Kiras who were assisted by the Durgaras, i.e., Dogras and the Saumatikas (probably inhabitants of Samarta, Basohli). But the attack was badly repulsed by Sahilavarman, the king of Chamba.

Thus Dogras find their first historical mention while taking part in a military campaign, their age-old occupation. This event also reveals the close link of the Dogras of Jammu or Babbapura with their Kinsmen, Saumatikas, i. e., ancient Balaurias, who have all through their recorded history, been always allies. This, again, gives us a glimpse of the rivalry of the Dogras and the rulers of Chamba and Kangra which grows grim by the advance of centuries, concluding in the subordination of the latter to Jammu during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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1. *The Times of India*, November 1, 1968.

2. Prof. Keilhorn : *Ind, Ant.*, 1888, p. 9.

The name of Jammu, however, does not find any mention in the records before the close of the 14th century when Amir Timur attacked Jammu in 1398-99, and the city is mentioned for the first-time both in the *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* and the *Zafarnama*. It is a matter of surprise that no mention of Jammu is to be found in the *Rajatarangini*, and the explanation most probably is, that Jammu did not become the capital of the State till later period. The original capital was at Bahu,<sup>3</sup> but it seems to have been changed for a time in the 11th century to Babbapura, now Babor, on the Dhar-Udhampur Road, some 15 kilometres from the latter place and some 40 kilometres to the North-east of Jammu. The *Rajatarangini* mentions the territory under the name of Babbapura, whose ruler 'Kirti' visited the court of King Kalasa of Kashmir in the year 1087-88 A.D.<sup>4</sup> Again, 'the Lord of Babbapura' has been mentioned in connection with events of Sussal's reign who ruled in Kashmir from A.D. 1112 to 1120.<sup>5</sup> On both these occasions Babbapura has been mentioned in combination with Champa (Chamba), Vallapura (Balawar), and Trigarta (Kangra).

The two Chamba copper-plate inscriptions referred to above point out towards their political groupings. Chamba was then invaded by a foreign army, called 'Kiras<sup>6</sup> in the local chronicle, probably Kashmir, assisted by Durgara (Jammu) and the Saumatakas or people of Vallapura (Balor) to the West of the Ravi. Chamba was assisted by the Trigartas and Kuluts in repulsing the Kashmiri invasion. But in the following century Chamba was subdued by Kashmir. The presence of Kirti of Babbapura, Asata of Champa, son of Lord of Vallapura (Balaor), Uttamapraja, ruler of Kashthavata (Kashtwar), along with rulers of Lohara, Urasa (Hazara), Rajapuri (Rajouri) and Kanda, in the court of King Kalasa of Kashmir (A.D. 1063-1089) shows that the Dogra states had for sometime accepted the suzerainty of Kashmir during the 11th century, and all the above-named eight hill principalities, spreading between the Ravi and the Indus, had become tributary to Kalasa.

The two Dogra rallying centres—Jamma and Nagarkot—find their earliest historical reference in Ferishta's history, and it relates to events which are said to have occurred in the first century of the Christian era.

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3. Stein : *Rajatarangini*, VII. Vs. 588-600, Footnote.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, Bk. VIII, Vs. 537-41.

6. The 'Kiras' were a tribe in the vicinity of Kashmir and are associated with the Kashmiris in the *Rajatarangini*. See Bk. VIII verse 2762.

It states that a king of Kanauj, named Ram Deo Rathor, invaded Kamaon and overran the hills as far west as Kashmir. In the course of this expedition, which lasted for five months he subdued 500 petty Chiefs, among whom is mentioned the Raja of Nagarkot who "agreed to meet Ram Deo at the temple, wherein the idol was placed. Thus the two princes met at the temple, when the Raja, having given his daughter in marriage to the son of Raja Ram Deo, the latter proceeded from there to the fort of Jammu."<sup>7</sup>

Where Ferishta got this interesting information we do not know, but it may have been derived from older documents now lost.

### **Groups of Dogra States.**

According to General Cunningham, the oldest classification of the Rajput principalities of the Western Himalaya, between the Sutlej, and the Indus, divided them into three groups, each of which was named after the state which held the position of head of the confederation. These were Kashmir, Durgara or Dugar, and Trigarta. The first group consisted of Kashmir and the petty states between the Indus and the Jehlam. Chamba was in early times associated with the first or the Kashmir group. The second group included Durgar (Jammu), and the petty States between the Jehlum and Ravi, and these were : Jammu, Mankot, Jasrota, Lakhanpur, Samba, Trikot, Akhnur, Riasi, Dalpatpur, Bhau, Bhoti, Chenani, Bandralta, Bhadarwah, Basohli, Bhadu, Kashtwar, Rajouri, Punch, Bhimber, Kotli, and Khari-Khari.

The third group comprised Jalandhara or Trigarta and the various small States between the Ravi and the Sutlej. There are indications that this division into three groups was in existence from a period anterior to the seventh century. A classification of much later date divided these Hill States into twenty-two Hindu and twenty-two Muhammandan Chiefships, the former being in the east and the latter to the west of the Chenab.<sup>8</sup> Again the twenty-two Hindu States between the Sutluj and the Chenab were arranged in two groups those of the Jullundur or Kangra group, and those of the Dugar or Jammu circle, one to the east and the other to the west of the Ravi, Kangra and Jammu being recognised as the respective heads. Chamba was chiefly associated with the Kangra circle, but owing to the fact that the Ravi divides the State into two parts, it was included in both groups.<sup>9</sup>

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7. *Elliot's History of India*, Vol. III.

8. *Anc. Geogr. of India*, P. 130.

9. *Kangra Settlement Report*, page 6.



## 20 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

### **Trigarta or Kangra.**

The Kingdoms of Jalandhara or Trigarta, at the time of its greatest expansion, previous to the Muhammadan invasions in the beginning of the 11th century, probably comprised almost all the country between the Satluj and the Ravi in the outer hills and also the Jalandhara Doab on the plains.<sup>10</sup> At that early period the state seems to have included two great provinces, under the above names, of which the capital was at Jalandhar, with a subordinate court at Nagarkot or Kangra. In somewhat later times its limits were restricted by the foundation of new principalities, either as offshoots from the parent stem, such as Jaswan, Guler, Siba and Datarpur; or independent states like Suket and Banghal in the east, and Pathankot-Nurpur in the west. At all times, however, the hold of the State on the outlying provinces must have been of a very loose character, and was probably nothing more than a nominal suzerainty over the petty Chiefs, called Ranas and Thakurs. This invariably seems to have been the case with the states of eastern parts of the Trigarta kingdom. In the middle part, around Kangra, the existence of numerous Rana families in Kangra proper, even to the present time, seems to indicate that there too in the ancient times numerous petty Chiefs wielded power. We read of a Rana of Kiragram or Baijnath (Vaidya Nath) in the 13th century, who was counted worthy to intermarry with the royal house of Trigarta or Kangra.<sup>11</sup>

After the Muhammadan invasions began, the territory of the plains was lost, and Nagarkot or Kangra then became the Chief capital; and with the rise of new principalities on its borders at the still later period, the state was probably reduced to the dimensions still obtaining at the time of its extinction in A. D. 1828.

The alternate name for the kingdom of Jalandhara in the ancient documents is Trigarta, meaning "the land of the three rivers," probably the Banganga, Kurali and Nayagul, which unite at Haripur, under the name of Trigada, which is the same as Trigar, and fall into the Bias opposite Siba Fort.<sup>12</sup> The name Trigadh was also in use for the Kangra State, down to the early part of the 19th century. The name Trigarta

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10. Cf. *Anc. Geogr. of India*, A. Cunningham, Vol. I. p. 137, from which it appears that the kingdom of Satadru, i.e., Sirhind and Chamba may also have formed a part of Jalandhara.

11. Hutchison and Vogel; *H.P.H.S.*, p. 99.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

found in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Puranas* as well as in the *Rajatarangini*. It is also given as synonymous with Jalandhara by Hemachandra who says : "*Jalandharas Trigartah syuh*", Jalandhara, that is, Trigarta.

Trigarta is repeatedly referred to in the Sanskrit literature. In the *Mahabharata* we read of "Susarman, the king of Trigarta", who was the ally of the Kauravas,<sup>13</sup> and attacked Virata, the king of Matsyas, with whom the Pandavas had sought refuge. Apparently the Trigartas and the Matsyas were neighbours.<sup>14</sup> The original seat of the family is said to have been in Multan and they retired under Susarman to the district of Jalandhara, where they settled and built the fort of Kangra.

The early chronology of Kangra is largely a matter of conjecture. The Vansavali contains nearly 500 names, from that of Bhumi Chand the founder, but of the early Rajas for many centuries we know nothing. The first name which may possibly be regarded as historical is that of Susarma Chandra, the 234th from the founder, called Susarman in the *Mahabharata*.

The history of Trigarta is practically a blank down to the capture of the Fort by Mahmud, but the references found in the *Rajatarangini*, and the narrative of Hiuen Tsang, established the fact that it had existed for six hundred years previous to this as an independent State. The capital of Trigarta was probably at Nagarkot (Kangra) from ancient times, but the place is not mentioned in history till the time of Mahmud of Ghazni, by whom it was captured in A.D. 1009. In the *Tarikh-i-Yamini* of 'Utbi, the secretary of Mahmud, it is called Bhimanagar, but Farishta refers to it as Bhimkot. These names are said to have been derived from the name of a previous Raja, who founded the fort, and these names refer to the fort and the town. Alberuni also mentioned the name Nagarkot.<sup>15</sup> In more recent times Trigarta also seems to have been known as Katoch, though this name may also be ancient, and from it the clan name of the ruling family is derived. The origin of the name is uncertain. Mr. Moorcroft, who visited Nadaun in 1820, states that the kingdom, of Kangra then contained three provinces, viz., Katoch, Changa and Palam.

The name Kangra is also of uncertain derivation, but probably of ancient origin, and may have been applied originally only to the fort. The fort was famed all over India in former times and was regarded as impregnable.

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13. *Anc. Geogr. of India*, p. 138 ; Rhys Davids ; *Budhist India*, p. 27.

14. *Wilson's Vishnu Purana*, p. 193 and Note 122.

15. *Alberuni's India*, 1910, p. 260. CF. *Anc. Geogr. of India*, p. 140,

## 22 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

### **Kashmir and the Dogra Hill States :**

During the middle ages Kashmir had sought to revive her ancient empire, and king Shankara-Varman (883-903 A. D.) is stated to have led conquering expeditions in the low hills south and east of Kashmir. The *Rajatarangini* states that an expedition led by king in person left Kashmir for the conquest of Gurjara (Gujarat in the west Panjab), and it is opposed by the Chief of Trigarta, 'who perhaps was wholly bent on the conquest of Gurjara.' Prithvi Chandar, the lord of Trigarta 'who had previously given his son, Bhuvan Chandar, as a hostage' had come into the Kashmiri King's neighbourhood to do homage. But on seeing the army of the king, large as the ocean, and fearing to be captured by it, on its approach he turned and fled far away, failing in resolve.<sup>16</sup>

Though Prithvi Chandra's name is not found in the *Vanshawali* yet we may accept the above as the record of an historical occurrence, from which it appears that Trigarta was then in some form subject to Kashmir, which had extended<sup>17</sup> its sovereign power as far as the Satluj. But the evidence is not conclusive, and the event might have referred to a contest of the neighbouring rivals. The Chamba copper-plate deeds of the 11th century throw some light on this struggle for supremacy, and refer to events which took place about 930 A.D. Chamba was then invaded by a foreign army, called "Kira"<sup>18</sup> in the local chronicle, probably Kashmir, assisted by Durgara (Jammu) and the Saumatakas or people of Vallapura (Balor) to the west of the Ravi, 'which was manifestly crushed by the fearful frown on his brow.' The 'Kira' or Kashmiri force was thus vanquished along with its Dogra allies. Chamba seems to have grown into a powerful State. The same record tells us that Trigarta (Kangra) and the Lord of Kuluta (Kulu), sought alliance with Chamba and rendered homage. Sahila Varman (920-940 A. D.) was then the ruler of Chamba. But in the following century Chamba was subdued by Kashmir, the Raja "uprooted" and another put in his place.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile the Kashmiri and Chamba supremacy in the Shiwalik hills seems to have been threatened by the rise of the Hindu Shahi

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16. Stein : *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Bk. V, 143-47.

17. Hutchison and Vogel : *HPHS* p. 89.

18. The Kiras were a tribe in the vicinity of Kashmir and are associated with the Kashmiris in the *Rajatarangini*, see BK VIII, V. 2767.

19. Hutchison and Vogel : *HPHS*, p. 90,

dynasty of Kabul and Udabhandapura in about 850 A. D, By the middle of the 10th century the Shahis had conquered Lahore and extended their sway upto Rohtak where coins of Bhim Dev Shahi have been discovered.

The Dogra principalities of Jammu group were also subject to the Hindu Shahi dynasty of Kabul and Ohind, after the withdrawal of the Kashmiri supremacy immediately after Sankar Varman's death in 903 A.D. Raja Bhoj Dev of Jammu and his son, Avtar Dev, were vassals of king Jaipal Shahi. They rendered personal services to their overlord whose kingdom spread upto Kangra. Raja Bhojdev was killed in Jaipal's first battle with Nasirud Din Sabuktigin of Ghazna<sup>20</sup> in A. D. 986-87. Avtardev also fulfilled his feudal obligations by sending his son, Pahlad Dev, to help king Jaipal against Mahmud of Ghazna<sup>21</sup> when the latter invaded the Shahi kingdom in about A.D. 1000. The Dogras of Jammu fought many battles against Mahmud, and on one such occasion Raja Avtar Dev gave the Ghazanavide a severe battle in which the invader is reported to have been wounded and forced to withdraw.<sup>22</sup>

About A.D. 870 the Turki Shahi dynasty which had ruled for many centuries over the Kabul and the Punjab, was subverted by the founder of the Hindu Shahis (who was the Wazir of the last Raja of the line), Lalliya Shahi, who changed the capital from Kakul to Peshawar and Udhbandapura, now Ohind on the Indus. The Kings of Kabul and Ohind came into deadly conflict with the Turushkas (Turkas), and in this conflict, the Hindu Kings of Kabul and Ohind seem to have the help of contingents from the hill States, including Kangra and Chamba, for the latter Chief Sahila Varman (920-40 A.D.) is said to have distinguished himself in these wars.<sup>23</sup> At length about A. D. 980, Kabul was captured and soon afterwards the last bulwark against the Muhammadans was broken down.

Kashmir had from ancient times asserted a claim to the suzerainty of the hill tracts on her borders, as far east as the Ravi. There were probably long intervals during which this claim was in abeyance, or when, as in the time of Sahil Varma of Chamba, it was impossible to enforce it ; and the hill states then enjoyed complete independence, It

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20. *Gulabnama*, p. 64.

21. *Ibid*, p. 65.

22. *Ibid*, pp. 65-66.

23. Hitchionsand Vogel : *H.P.H.S.* P. 114.

## 24 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

was in one of such gaps that the Hindu Shahis established their sway over whole of the Panjab and the hill States where their coins have been discovered in thousands.

That Trigarta (Kangra) too was subject to the Hindu Shahis, has been borne out by A. Cunningham on the ground that the fabulous wealth found by Mahmud in Nagarkot "must have consisted chiefly of the silver pieces or the dramas of the Rajas of Kabul" and he concludes that "it was the hoard of the Hindoo Sahi kings of Kabul and Ohind who also ruled the Punjab."<sup>24</sup> It seems not improbable that Kangra fort may have been in the possession of the Turki-Sahi and the Hindu Sahi kings. Alberuni also states that the names of the Turki Sahi princes were recorded on a piece of silk found in the fort of Nagarkot at the time of its capture. They had reigned for sixty generations.<sup>26</sup> The Raja of the time is said to have been Jagdish Chand, who was 202nd from Susarma Chand of Mahabharata fame.

With the invasions of Mahmud and capture of Lahore and Kangra by him in 1009 and 1039 A. D. respectively, the supremacy of Hindu Shahis in the Dogra Hills came to an end and with this the long conflict with the Turushkas also ended. Mahmud had conquered Peshawar, Multan and Lahore. In 1009 A. D. he swooped down on Kangra speedily and suprisingly. The fort and the Bhawan were without a garrison as all the troops had probably been deployed by Anand Pal to the frontier. The local population was taken by surprise and could not find time to muster troops. The priests and inmates of the fort had nothing but to submit and fall before the enemy "like sparrows before an eagle or rain before the lightning."

Ferishta<sup>26</sup> writes : "The greater part of the garrison was away in the field, and those within consisted for the most part of priests, who, have little inclination to the bloody business of war, made overtures to capitulate, and on the third day Mahmood became master of this strong citadel without opposition or bloodshed."

"In Bhim were found," continues Ferishta, "700,000 golden dinars, 700 Mans of gold and sivler plates, 200 mans of pure gold in ingots, 2,000 mans of silver bullions, 20 mans of various jewels, including pearls, corals, diamonds and rubies, which had been collected since the

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24, A Cunningham : *Anc. Geogr. of India*, p. 10.

25, Vide Elliot's *History*, Vol. II, Appendix, pp, 409-10. Cf, *J. P. H. S.* Vol. III, No. 2, pp. 115 to 129 ; also *Early Hist. of India*, V. Smith, pp. 219 ff.

26. *Farishta*, Bigg's translation, Vol. I, 1909, pp. 48-49.

time of Bhim, the details of which would be tedious. With this vast booty Mahmud returned to Ghazni". To this inventory of the booty may be added, besides wearing apparel and fine cloth of sus, "a house of white silver, like to the houses of rich men, the length of which was thirty yards and the breadth fifteen. It would be taken to pieces and put together again, and there was a canopy made of the fine linen of Room, forty yards long and twenty broad, supported on two golden and two silver poles, which had been cast in moulds".<sup>27</sup>

The Kangra fort was then occupied by a Ghazanavide officer and held by a garrison till A. D. 1043.<sup>28</sup> The conquest of the Punjab by Mahmud was only partial, and we read of no permanent garrison having been established till A. D. 1023 except that of Kangra. Till then the Pal Kings continued to exercise a nominal rule, in bitter warfare against the foe, but on the death of Bhim-Pal, the last of the line, the Hindu Kingdom was finally overthrown about A. D. 1026.<sup>29</sup>

Soon after the death of Mahmud the principalities of Dogra hills severed their relations with the Ghazanavide power and Kashmir once again revived its claim of supremacy over these states. The *Rajatarangini* states that "king Ananta (1028-1063 A. D.), who won victories over various kings, uprooted at Campa King Sala (Salavahana), and placed a new ruler on the throne".<sup>30</sup>

Salvahana Varma ruled in Chamba from about 1040 to 1060, and it may be safely opined that king Ananta Dev of Kashmir attacked the Dogra State of Chamba in about 1055 A. D. He dethroned Salavahana and annointed Soma Varma (1060-1080) on the throne of Chamba. Vallapura or Balor, another small hill State of the Dogra group on the west of Ravi was at the same time invaded by Ananta Deva.<sup>31</sup> Bilhana<sup>32</sup> speaks of king Ananta's supremacy being acknowledged by Champa, Darvabhisara, Trigarta and Bartula. Trigarta's (Kangra) subjection to Kashmir at this time is corroborated by the statement of *Rajatarangini*<sup>33</sup> that somewhere about 1030-40 A. D., Ananta Deva was married to two princesses of the

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27: Al-Utbi : Tarikhi-Yamini.

28. *Ferishta*. Brigg's trans, 1909, Vol. I, pp. 118-19. Elliot's Hist, Vol, II, pp. 444-46.

29. Elliot's Hist., Vol. II, Appendix, p. 427.

30. *Rajatarangini*, VII, V. 218 and footnote.

31. *Ibid.*, VII, V. 220 ; *Chamba Gazetteer*, 1963, P. 114.

32. Bilhana : *Vikarmankadev Charita*, XVIII, 38.

33. *Rajatarangini*, VII, 150, 152 ; *J.P.H.S.* Vol. VII, No. 2, pages 127-28.

Kattoch family, "the daughters of Inder Chandra, the Lord of Jalandhara". This is the last reference to the State in the history of Kashmir. After this Trigarta (Kangra) seems to have become independent. Babbapura (Jammu), Champa, and Vallapura (Balor-Basohli), however, were allied to the interests of the Kashmiri kings at least upto the reign of Sussala (1112-20)." "Kirti, the ruler of Babbapura, Asata, king of Champa, and Kalasa...Lord of Vallapura" were among the eight kings who came at the same time to the capital of Kalasa<sup>34</sup>, the king of Kashmir in 1087-88 A. D.

The last event of the history of Kashmir in which the rulers of Dogra principalities were involved was the restoration of the Kashmir throne to Bhikshachara, son of Bhoja, who had been taken away to Malwa. Returning from there in A.D. 1112, he fell in with a party of Hill Chiefs, "five in all", including Jasata (1105-1118 A.D.) of Chamba, Vajradhara, lord of Babbapura (Jammu), Raja Sahajapāla the Lord of Vartule, as well as Yuvarajas of Trigarta (Kangra) and Vallapura (Balor).<sup>35</sup> With the support of these and some of the Thakurs in the Chander Bhaga Valley, Bhikshachara gained the throne of Kashmir in A. D. 1120, which however, he retained only for six months. Chamba seems to have changed sides immediately after Bhikshachara's success, for when in A.D. 1121-22, Sussala made a successful effort to regain the throne, he had the active support of Udaiya Varma (1120-1143 A. D.) The power of Kashmir was now on the decline, and Chamba seems to have taken advantage of this to assert its independence, and there is no further reference to Chamba, Babbapura, Trigarta and other Dogra States in the *Rajatarangini*. The supremacy of Kashmir over Dogra States was over by the beginning of the twelfth century.

### **Stubborn Resistance to Muslim Inroads**

Chamba had probably enjoyed complete independence after this for more than four hundred years ; for the early Muhammadan rulers of India were too much engrossed in defending or extending their possessions on the plains to attempt conquest of inner mountains. Kangra, it is true, was invaded once again by Firoz Tughlak (A.D. 1351-89), but there is no evidence that these inroads extended beyond the Siwalik. With the rise of Mughal power, however, this immunity and freedom came to an end.

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34. *Rajatarangini*. VII, Vs. 587-90.

35. *Ibid*, VIII, Vs 637-41.

Trigarta or Kangra also enjoyed peace and freedom till the time of Jahangir, except for a short time when Firoz Tughlak invested it in about 1370 A. D. But this seems to be a raid and not occupation of the fort and the country. As the Shash Fateh Kangra states : "Firoz, who was one of the greatest kings of Delhi, once laid seige to this fort, but it baffled all his efforts ; for, at last he was contented with having an interview with the Raja and was obliged to return unsuccessful". The same work states that from the commencement of Sultan Ghiasud-Din's power, to the year 963, Hijri (1556 A.D.), the fort had been besieged no less than 52 times by the most powerful rulers and kings ; but no one had been able to take it. Akbar's general Khan-i-Jahan also failed to take it in spite of a prolonged seige by a numerous army. Ultimately, "the mighty army of the Emperor Jahangir" succeeded in conquering the fort in 1620, and since then the fort continued to be held by a Mughal garrison which was ultimately driven out by Raja Sansar Chand in 1783 and it once again became the property of the Katoch Rajas for a short time

But things had been different with Babbapura (Jammu), Jasrota, Dhameri, (Nurpur-Pathankot State) and the territory of Kangra. These principalities had to carry on a grim struggle against Muslim inroads for many centuries. In 1398-99 A.D., the Dogra people had to face the invasion of Amir Timur, in which the Raja of Jammu had to bear the brunt of a furious fight. Before arriving at Jammu, Timur had severe conflicts in the outer valleys of Siwaliks, between, Satluj and Bias, with the forces of the Raja of Nagarkota (Kangra), but does not appear to have penetrated as far as Kangra fort, nor does he mention its capture. Passing through Paithan (mod. Pathankot), he reached Mansar, invested the village Baila (Babliana), and plundered, 'Manun' village and the city of Jammu. Raja Mal Dev (1380-1407), of Jammu, however, was captured by a strategem, but was set free on payment of a ransom and after "he had thus been received into the fold of the faithful".<sup>36</sup> As stated earlier, it was Mal Dev who shifted in about 1380 the Dogra capital from Babbapura to Jammu after it had been at the former place for about three centuries.

Mal Dev's son and successor Hamir or Bhim Dev had to meet a great challenge to the Dogra state which was threatened by the rising power of the Khokhars of Darvabhisara hills. Bhim Dev (A.D. 1407-1423) faced the challenge by transferring his allegiance to the powerful Sayyid ruler of Delhi, Mubarak Shah who ruled from 1421 to 1434 A.D.

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36. Elliot's *History*, Vol III *Malfuzat-i-Timuri*, pp 467-72, and 520.



The Khokhar leader, Jusrath who had his stronghold at Tekhar in Rajouri hills, revolted against the Delhi authority, conquered the whole of the Panjab upto Sirhind, but was defeated by the combined forces of Rai Bhim and Mubarak Shah.<sup>37</sup> Rai Bhim afterwards inflicted many defeats on the Khokhars with the help of the Sayyid forces. But at last he was killed in a battle with Jusrath Khokhar in 1423 A.D.<sup>38</sup> It is said that the daughter of Rai Bhim, whom the Khokhar had forcibly married, killed Jusrath in revenge for the death of her father.<sup>39</sup>

With the rise of Mughal power in Northern India, the selfrule of these hill states was jeopardised. Humayun and Sher Shah Suri conquered these states and appointed governors in Lahore and Jalandhara to rule over these hill principalities. But the hill rulers were always in revolt. The Afghan governor of Malot, Hamid Khan Kakar, held such firm possession of the Nagarkot, Jwala, Dhihdawal and Jammu hills, in fact the whole country, that no man dared to breathe in opposition to him. But the Hill Rajas could not reconcile to the oppressive rule of the Muslim viceroys. The revolts were frequent and one such revolt occurred in the reign of Salim Shah Sur (1545-53 A.D.), when Jammu fort was captured.<sup>40</sup> The hill Princes rebelled in collaboration with the Ghakkars.<sup>41</sup> The revolt was, however, suppressed.

On his accession Akbar advanced against the Kangra fort which he reduced, and he then received the Katoch Chief into favour. In A.D. 1558, Sikandar Shah Sur emerged from his retreat in the hills, and occupied the fort of Maukot in Nurpur-Pathankot State which he held for eight months. The Raja of Mau-Paithan (Nurpur-Pathankot) State had helped him. On capitulation of Sikandar the Raja was taken to Lahore and executed.

The hill states resented Akbar's rule and rose in revolt frequently. In about 1589 A.D. one such revolt led by Raja Bidi Chand of Kangra, raised its head throughout the Hill States lying between the Chenab and the Satluj, in which the Hill Chiefs involved include the following names : Raja Bidhi Chand of Kangra, Raja Basu from Mau (Nurpur), Anrudah from Jaswan, Raja of Kahlur, Raja Jagdish Chand from Didwal, Rai Sansar Chand from Pauna, Rai Rao Udiya of Dhamriwal,

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37. Ishwari Prasad, *History of Mediaeval India*, p. 476.

38. *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, in Elliot's *History*, III. p. 59.

39. *Ain-i-Akhari*, Eng. Trans., Vol. I, p. 344 ; *Masirul-Umara*, p. 367.

40. Hitchison & Vogel : *H.P.H.S.*, 535.

41. *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, in Elliot's *History*, IV, pp. 493-95.

Raja Parasram from the Jammu hills, Rai Pratap from Jasrota, Rai Balbadhar from Lakhanpur.<sup>42</sup> Jain Khan Koka, Akbar's foster brother, moved his force into the hills near Paithan (Pathankot). He combed the Hills and went on to the banks of the Satluj. All the inhabitants of Kangra group of States submitted. But the revolt of Jammu Hill's people was a serious one and though "ornaments had been several times sent under different amirs of distinction to effect the subjugation of Jammu, Ramgarh and other places; but this difficult enterprise had never been satisfactorily accomplished."<sup>43</sup> In 1594-95 A.D., a big Mughal force was moved against the Dogras and the forts of Jammu, Ramgarh and Samba were taken. Raja Bhabu of Jasrota and Balibhadra of Lakhanpur offered a stiff resistance before abandoning their strongholds to Mughal occupation. The Dogras of Jammu, however, kept up their spirits and we hear that Raja Sangram Dev of Jammu, referred to by Jahangir about A.D. 1616-17, opposed Raja Man, the governor of Lahore and killed him.<sup>44</sup> But a few years later, in A.D. 1620, we find Raja Sangram helping the Mughal Governor of Kashmir in the subjugation of Kishtwar. Similarly he accompanied Jahangir's official, Qasim Khan, on an expedition against Kangra. It seems that the rulers of Jammu had been reconciled to Mughal dominance and Raja Sangram Dev and his immediate successors, Bhup Dev (1624-50) and Hari Dev (1650-86), were enrolled as Mansabdars in the Mughal hegemony. Raja Hari Dev died on a Deccan expedition of Aurangzeb Alamgir.<sup>45</sup> The process of reconsolidation and liberation of Dogra Raj recommenced in the reign of Gajai Dev (1586-1703) and was brought to completion by the efforts of Dhruv Dev (1703-33) and Ranjit Dev (1733-1782).

The resistance of the Dogras of Mau-Paithan (Nurpur-Pathankot) State to the Muslim invaders was exceptionally brave as well as a prolonged affair. This state seems to have been founded in the eleventh century, at about A.D. 1095<sup>46</sup> by Jeth Pal, a scion of the Tomar Rajas of Delhi, who made Paithan (ancient Prateshthan) or Pathankot his capital. In his line of succession was one Kailas Pal (A.D. 1313-53) who wounded Tatar Khan, the Muhammandan governor of the Punjab under Muhammad Tughlak (A.D. 1325-51). A couplet commemorating this event has come down to our times.

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42. *Masirul Umara*, Eng. Trans., p. 1026; *Akbarnama*, III, pp. 583.

43. *Akbarnama*, in Elliot's *History*, Vol. VI, p. 125.

44. *Tuzak-i-Jahangiri*, Vol. II, pp. 55, 88, 141, 171, 175, 193; Hutchison & Vogel: *HPS*, p. 538.

45. *Gulabnama*, p. 70.

46. A. Cunningham: *Arch Surv. of India Reports*, Vol. XIV, 1878, pp. 115-19.

जो मुख देखन आरसी सीसे दिल-कनन्दा ।  
मत्थे फट्ट तातार खान कैलासे आन्दा ॥

“When looks at his face in the heart-rending mirror, Tatar Khan sees on his fore-head the scar of the wound inflicted by Kailas.”

The Mau-Paithan Raj was later on subjugated by the Suri Sultans during the year 1542-43 A.D. But the rulers and people were always in revolt. In the revolt of Hill Rajas against Hamid Khan Kakar during the reign of Islam Shah Sur (1545-53) mentioned above, the Raja of Mau-Paithan also participated. He was Raja Bakht Mal of Pathankot. From his rule to that of Raja Bir Singh of Nurpur till 1849, the history of Pathankot-Nurpur state is a sanguine account of a brave struggle of its Rajas and people for independence from an alien rule which they never willingly tolerated. Whenever the times were favourable the Rajas raised their head in revolt against the Muhammadan ascendancy but had to submit time and again before superior numbers. In spite of repeated defeats, however, their love for freedom remained uncurbed.

Raja Bakht Mal helped Sikandar Shah Sur against Akbar, for which offence he was taken to Lahore and executed. His successor Basu Dev (1580-1613) was a great king and zealous devotee of the goddess of freedom. From 1585 to 1603-4 he rebelled five times against the authority of Akbar but was pardoned on all occasions. He had, however, to lose Pathankot which Akbar annexed to his territories. Basu had therefore to shift his capital to Dhamera, the present Nurpur. His successor Jagat Singh of Nurpur (1619-49) was a more formidable rebel as well as a conqueror. He was a great friend and minion of Jahangir. But he was not wanting in the rebellions blood of his ancestors. When Prince Khurram rebelled in 1623 A.D. against his father, Jahangir, Jagat Singh rebelled in favour of the prince. In 1641, however, Jagat Singh and his son Rajrup threw a serious challenge to Mughal supremacy in the hills. A large Mughal army had to be moved against him. He lost Maukot and Nurpur forts. But he took shelter in Taragarh fort, and it is said that he resisted Mughal attack for twelve years. In addition to numerous Mughal officials, almost all the hill rajas of Jammu, Basohli, Chamba, Guler and other States had been moved against him. Jagat Singh capitulated on 11th March, 1642 and was pardoned and restored to his *mansabs* and honours. The resistance which he offered was in fact stubborn and spirited.

#### **Dogras Conquer Balkh and Badakhshan.**

Jagat Singh's military conquests were equally spectacular. After being reconciled to Shah Jahan, Jagat Singh undertook to reinforce

Amir-ul-Umara Ali Mardan Khan in the conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan. The historian Elphinstone makes a special mention of this expedition of Jagat Singh against the Uzbeks. "Next year, the enterprise (conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan) was attempted by Raja Jagat Singh against the Uzbeks. "Next year, the enterprise (conquest of Balkh and Badakhshan) was attempted by Raja Jagat Singh whose chief strength lay in a body of 14,000 Rajputs, raised in his own country and paid by the Emperor. The spirit of the Rajputs never shone more brilliantly than in this unusual duty. They stormed mountain passes, made forced marches over snow, constructed redoubts by their own labour, the Raja himself taking an axe like the rest, and bore up against the tempests of that frozen region as firmly against the fierce and repeated attacks of the Uzbeks<sup>47</sup>. Jagat Singh, accompanied by his second son, Bhau Singh, descended upon Khost and occupied it, repulsed numerous fierce attacks of the Uzbeks of Balkh and reached the frontier of Panjshir. His elder son, Rajrup, had also reached for his aid. Never had any Mughal or any other Indian army, carried its conquering arms as far West beyond the Hindu Kush as was done by Jagat Singh and his sons. When Jagat Singh died at Peshawar in January, 1646, his son Rajrup Singh became Raja of Nurpur. He also played an important part in enhancing the North West frontier policy of the Mughals and probably spent about 10 years on that frontier. He rendered meritorious services in fighting against the Uzbeks and Almans in Balkh, Badakhshan and Qandahar. He assisted Prince Aurangzeb and Dara Shikoh in Kabul expeditions and in 1647-48 he was made commander of Kahmard Fort.

Bhau Singh, younger son of Jagat Singh did good service in the campaign of Badakhshan, and after his father's death he still continued in service on the North-West frontier. Mandhata (1661-1700), son of Rajrup, was also appointed to the charge of Bamian and Ghorband on the Western frontier of the empire. The Dogras of Pathankot-Nurpur principality were thus the cause of the success of the Mughal forward policy on the North-Western frontier. They had the credit of conquering trans-Hindukush territories for the Mughals.

In 1650 Shahjahan gave to Bhau Singh, as a fief, the portion of Nurpur between the Ravi and the Chakki, including the *taluqas* of Shahpur, Palahi and Kandi. In 1686 Bhau Singh embraced Islam. This State was overturned by the Sikhs in 1781, and Raja Prithvi Singh of Nurpur, benefitting from the lawlessness in the Punjab, recovered

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47. Elphinstone : *History of India*, 1857, p. 511.

most of the territories to the west of the Chakki. The descendants of Bhau Singh resided at Sujampur before they migrated to Pakistan in 1947.

#### **A Galaxy of Big and Small States.**

The states of the Dugar-Trigarta hills have multiplied with the march of time, and these hills soon presented a panorama of congeries of tiny states emanating from the parent stems like branches, twigs and saplings of a tree. This multiplicity of states favoured a situation in which inter-state struggle became a norm. Even when Mughal power had taken all these states into its fold, this local trife of the neighbouring Rajas never ceased with the result that their boundaries were always fluid and their frontiers as if formed of shifting sands,

The largest and the most powerful of these parent states was Trigarta or Kangra which was founded in the hoary past which has lost sight in the mists of antiquity. This kingdom of Trigarta or Jalandhara, at the time of its greatest expansion, previous to the Muhammadan invasions in the beginning of eleventh century, probably comprised almost all the country between the Satluj and the Ravi in outer hills, except Kulu, and also the Jalandhara Doab on the plains. The Kingdoms of Satadru and Chamba may also have formed a part of Trigarta empire. In somewhat later times its limits were restricted by the foundation of new principalities, either as offshoots from the parent stem, and these were states like Suket and Bangahal in the east, and Pathankot or Nurpur in the West.

*Gular*, i.e., Gwalior was founded in about 1415 A.D. by Raja Hari Chand of Nagarkot. In the fourth generation after Hari Chand, a younger brother of the ruling Chief of Guler, named Sibarn Chand, made himself independent in a tract south of the Bias probably about A.D. 1450, and founded the *Siba* State.

*Datarpur* State was an offshoot from Siba as Siba was from Guler. A scion of the Guler ruling family, some 10 generations after Sibarn Chand, named Datar Chand founded this tiny State, about A.D. 1550 with his residence at Dada.

Similarly *Jaswan* State had also been founded earlier by a cadet of the Katoch line of Kangra, named Purab Chand, about 1170, in a fertile tract in the Jaswan Dun of the outer hills.

As state dearlier Mau-Paithan (Nurpur-Pathankot) state was founded by Jath Pal, Tomer.....in 1095 A.D. Chamba had also declared its independence of Nagarkot at even an earlier date. The

Traigarta kingdom had thus broken up into still smaller principalities in later centuries.

It was still worse with the region between the Ravi and the Jehlam. The Dugar (Jammu) State is very ancient, but as stated earlier it finds mention only in connection with events of 930 A.D. under the name 'Dugar'; and Babbapura, its capital during the middle ages, finds frequent mention in the *Rajatarangini*. The state seems to have been divided in the beginning of the eleventh century when Jas Dev, the Raja of Jammu, founded Jasrota, and his brother Karan Dev, formed the *Jasrota State* about A.D. 1099. As Jasrota was a branch of Jammu, similarly *Lakhanpur* separated from the former state when Sangram Dev, brother of Raja Partap Dev of Jasrota, separated from the family and founded Lakhanpur State in about A.D. 1290. Soon Sangram Dev's son or grandson Malhu, followed his example and broke off in about A.D. 1325 and founded the *Samba State*. Similarly *Tirikot* was another offshoot from Lakhanpur. *Bhau, Dalpatpur, Mankot, Bhoti* and *Akhnur* were other tiny states which broke off from Jammu and were ruled by the same family. They were all founded probably in the 13th and 14th centuries.

*Balor* (Basohli), *Bhadu* and *Bhadrawah* were ruled by the same family. Balor (Vallahpura of the *Rajatarangini*) is in the upper Ujh Valley to the west of the Ravi and is many times mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* in the 11th century. Bhaddu and Bhadarwah were fiefs of Balor, but became independent in the 11th and 15th centuries respectively.

These big and small states were usually at war with each other. The keenest rivalry seems to have been shared by Chamba, Kangra, Nurpur, Basohli (Balor) and Jammu who probably aspired to become paramount power in the Siwalik hills. Chamba was the first to try to extend its supremacy. In a war with Kangra, Raja Pratap Singh Varma (1559-86) of Chamba defeated Katoch forces and occupied Guler. It also kept a firm hold on Lahul. Chamba, however, met reverses in its war with Nurpur. Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur was high in favour with the Mughals with whose help he advanced on Chamba, captured and sacked the capital in about 1623 A.D. Since then till the rebellion of Jagat Singh in 1641, Nurpur remained supreme over Chamba. When Jagat Singh rebelled and Mughal armies moved against him in 1641 and invested the forts of Mankot and Nurpur, Prithvi Singh recovered Chamba with the help of troops from the rajas of Mandi and Suket, and

probably of Raja Sangram Pal of Basohli to whom he surrendered the *pargana* of Bhalai. Afterwards this *pargana* became a bone of contention between the two States.

Prithvi Singh also seems to have brought under his control Kashtwar, Guler, Kahlur, and Nurpur<sup>48</sup> which, however, were "plucked from the Chambials" by Sangram Pal of Basohli. The next ruler of Chamba, Chatar Singh (1664-90) was a brave ruler. He invaded Basohli and re-annexed Bhalai to Chamba. He strengthened his hold on Pangri and occupied Paddar. He founded the town named Chatargarh. He was bold enough to defy Aurangzeb's orders for demolition of temples. He also participated in the revolt of the hill chiefs from Jammu to Kangra and defeated the Mughal governor Rezia Beg. But with his death in 1690 the supremacy of Chamba passed away. Internal dissensions showed their head, and during the following century Chamba remained under the influence of the Dogra State of Jammu.

#### Ascendency of Jammu in the Hills :

Like all other Hill States, Jammu too enjoyed intermittent periods of freedom and subjection. After the withdrawal of the Kashmiri supremacy from the Dogra Hills, Jammu and its offshoots became independent. But from the days of the Suri rule Jammu had become tributary to Delhi and had remained so till the beginning of the eighteenth century. During the period of subjection, it joined the several revolts of the Hill Rajas for the liberation of their land from the Muslim supremacy.

The beginning of the ascendency of Jammu in the Hills may be said to have been made about A. D. 1650. Even earlier the States of Jasrota, Lakhanpur, Mankot-Bandralta, Chaneni, Riasi and Akhnur were subject to Jammu. But Bhup Dev and Hari Dev, Rajas of Jammu, unified the State firmly and extended its influence far and wide. Raja Bhup Dev, written as "Rai Bhupat Jamwai", stands witness as overlord of Basohli in a *sanad* dealing with a boundary dispute between Raja Prithvi Singh of Chamba and Sangram Pal of Basohli, whereby the *pargana* 'Bhalai' was restored to Chamba<sup>49</sup>. Bhupat's successor, Hari Dev (1650-86), ejected the Bahuwal Rajas from their seat at Bahu fort and succeeded in uniting the two portions of Jammu Raj—Bahu and Jammu,—into one integral principality.

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48. Hutchison and Vogel : *HPHS*, Vol. II. P 605

49. Vogel, J. Ph. : *Catalogue of Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba*, 52-53.

Jammu State shook off the yoke of Mughal supremacy during the rule of Raja Dhruv Dev (A. D. 1703-33). He drove out Mughal officials from Jammu and declared his independence. At the same time he extended his sway over the surrounding Hill States. The Lakhanpur-Bhsohli Hills upto the Ravi were included in his territory. He tightened his grip over these and over Jasrota, Samba and Bhadu-Balor. He extended his dominion into the Middle Mountains to the north of Jammu. With the help of Basohli and Bhadu he tried to extend his sway over the principalities to the east of the Ravi. He attacked Gular, but Udai Singh, Raja thereof, drove away the Jammu armies with the help of Siba, Mandi and Kahlur<sup>50</sup> (Bilaspur). Nurpur seems to have been in the sphere of his influence. He also extended his protectorate over Chamba. He gave shelter to Uggar Singh, the regent of Chamba, and when Udai Singh died in 1720, Dhruv Dev furnished Uggar Singh with all necessary assistance, and sent him back to Chamba where he was installed as Raja.

But it was in the reign of Ranjit Dev (A. D. 1733-1782) that the supremacy of Jammu extended far and wide and all the Dogra principalities came under one sceptre. By A. D. 1750 that State was master of all the territory between the river Chenab and the Ravi. Its influence extended over Kishtwar and Bhadarwah in the Inner Mountains, and also included the States of Mankot, Bandralta, Basohli and Jasrota in the east.

Ranjit Dev's sway extended even over Nurpur, Chamba, Kangra, and Guler ; whereas the distant States of Mandi, Bilaspur and Bashahr came within his sphere of influence. The Persian and Takri letters and *sanads* preserved in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba and the Archival Repository at Jammu amply bear out this fact. These records reveal that the Dogra ruler asserted his supremacy over most of these States, dictated them terms and acted as arbitrator of their political behaviour.

Jammu's efforts to establish its dominance to the east of the Ravi date back at least to the days of Gajai Singh and Dhruv Dev. As stated earlier Dhruv Dev led an expedition against Guler, which was, however, foiled. The rulers of Jammu had for some time past, claimed a sort of suzerainty over Chamba, and as noticed above, the fugitive claimants to the '*gaddi*' of that principality found ready shelter in Jammu. Uggar Singh had been made Raja of Chamba with the help of Jammu.<sup>51</sup>

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50. *Chamba Gazetteer*, 1963, p. 131.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 132.



Another prince of Chamba, Dalel Singh, son of Raghunath Singh, also found a congenial residence with his maternal uncle in Jammu territory. During the minority of Raja Raj Singh, Ranjit Dev had established complete control over Chamba and had appointed one of his own officials named Aklu to office of *wazir*. But in A.D. 1774 Raj Singh imprisoned Aklu and tried to do away with the Jammu supremacy.<sup>52</sup> Ranjit Dev sent an army under Raja Amrit Pal of Basohli to chastise Raj Singh. The Jammu troops conquered and occupied Chamba. But Raj Singh succeeded in driving out Jammu troops after three months with the assistance of the Ramgarhia Sardars. This took place in A.D. 1775. But soon after Chamba once again submitted before the supremacy of Jammu. Even after Ranjit Dev's death his successor Brijraj Dev continued arbitrating in Basohli-Chamba disputes and a number of *sanads* and letters from Brijraj Dev show that "at that period both Basohli and Chamba regarded Jammu as their suzerain."<sup>53</sup>

A letter of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, shows that Ranjit Dev's influence and suzerainty engrossed Kangra also within its fold. The letter reads that "orders have been issued to all other Rajas that they should obey you", and it particularly mentions the Katoch Raja.<sup>54</sup>

Akhnur and Raisi had been annexed to Dogra kingdom quite earlier, and Ranjit Dev's sway and influence extended upto Rajauri and Mirpur in the west. The *Tarikh-i-Punjab* states that Rajauri was then tributary to Jammu.<sup>55</sup> With the death of Raja Ghummand Chand Katoch of Kangra in 1774 Ranjit Dev was left supreme in the Hills from the Jehlum to the Bias and the adjoining plains. The death of Ahmad Shah Durrani in A.D. 1773 had already left Ranjit Dev a sovereign Chief over all the Hill principalities.

In the plains Ranjit Dev had extended his sway upto Gujrat, Sialkot Zafarwal and Shakargarh. He could thus win for Jammu the proud distinction of being the leader of the traditional twenty-two Hill States—Baiyan bich Jammu Sardar hai—lying on the both sides of the Ravi, from Bilaspur (Kahlur) and Mandi in the east, to Bhimber and Rajapuri in the west. On the north side it included Kishtwar and Bhadarwa States, and extended upto the Banihal pass across which he sent his armies twice in support of the Durrani and for the third time

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52. W. G Archer : *Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills*, London, 1952, p. 45.

53. *Ibid.*

54. State Archival Repository, Jammu, *Persian Documents*, File No: 2 of the year A.H. 1183.

55. Hutchison and Vogel : *HPHS*, p. 5:5.

in order to conquer the Valley for himself. Maharaja Ranjit Dev was, therefore, the first Dogra ruler who for the first time brought under one crown the various components of Dogra principality some of which now form part of a separate administrative unit.

Ranjit Dev was not only a great conqueror and empire builder, but was also a just administrator imbued with secular ideals, and a liberal patron of all creeds and concepts. He gave the Dogra State peace and security not to be found any where else in northern India. To all alike, Hindu and Muslim, he "extended welcome, and his capital grew and flourished."<sup>56</sup> In the words of a British reporter.

"The said Raja is distinguished for courage and valour and is so just and kind to his *ryots* that the inhabitants of the Punjab and the Doab (Gangetic) have since the time of Nadir Shah's invasion, always found a safe refuge in his country from the tyranny of unscrupulous adventurers. He (reporter) knows of no other people from Attock to Delhi who live more free from fear than those of Jammu."<sup>57</sup>

The peace and security which prevailed in the Dogra State and its capital invited thousands of merchants, courtiers, political refugees, artisans and people in general to take shelter in Dogra territory and in Jammu city. Ranjit Dev was thus justified to proclaim Jammu as 'Abode of Peace and Safety'— "Dar-ul Aman Jammu"<sup>58</sup>— on his coins.

With the death of Ranjit Dev in April, 1782, the glory and unity of Dogra kingdom passed away. His son and successor, Brijraj Dev, was a brave ruler. But he could not keep his hold on his kingdom for long. The neighbouring Misl of Sukarchakias, Bhangis and Kanhiyas combined against him and invaded and plundered Jammu for several times. His supremacy over Basohli and Chamba continued for some time. But as the invasions of Sikh Misl had ransacked his treasury and broken his power, his hold on constituent principalities of Dogra State loosened. In 1785 Sikhs occupied his territories in the plains, and soon Basohli, Jasrota and Ramnagar in the Hills also fell off and were occupied by Sikh Sardars. For the following two years he made a hectic and frantic effort to recover his lost territories, and in that heroic effort laid down his life in A.D. 1787 in the battle of Ranjitgarh.

His successors could not stem the tide of Sikh invasions though they tried to save the Dogra State from the deluge of disintegration by

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56. G. C. Smyth : *A Hist. of the Reigning Family of Lahore*. p. 241.

57. *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, V. 1836.

58. *J.A.S.B.*, LIV, Pt. I, pp. 63 and 65.

reviving the suzerainty of the Abdalis of Kabul in the Dogra Hills. All the Dogra principalities fell before the marauding inroads of the Sikhs and bled profusely under their oppression and rapine. The Dogra kingdom broke up into as many fragments as it was composed of. At last Jammu itself fell victim to Sikh invasions, and by A.D. 1808 it had been occupied by the armies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore. The last Dogra ruler, Raja Jit Singh, and his politic Minister, Mian Mota, organised stiff resistance against the Sikh onslaught, but their meagre resources in men and material were quite unequal to the invader's zeal for plunder and rapine. At last, Raja Jit Singh was deposed in A.D. 1812 and Jammu, the nucleus of the Dogra State, was annexed to Ranjit Singh's kingdom of Lahore.

On the other side of the Ravi, Raja Bir Singh of Nurpur was driven out of his capital and his principality was subverted by Ranjit Singh's officers in 1815. Basohli, Jasrota, Ramnagar and Akhnur had also met a similar fate. The fort of Kangra had already been occupied by Ranjit Singh during the Katoch-Gurkha wars, and Raja Sansar Chand had been reduced to the status of a vassal chief of Lahore Darbar. Thus by A.D. 1815, the Dogra State had been completely disintegrated and all its principalities had been annexed to the Sikh kingdom.

But a stubborn defiance of Ranjit Singh's authority in the Dogra Hills in the shape of bold and desperate resistance by its people under the rebellious leadership of Mian Dido, Mian Diwan Singh and their followers had already started. Ranjit Singh had sought to tighten his grip on Jammu step by step. In 1812 it was assigned to Prince Kharak Singh in *jagir*. Raja Jit Singh was deposed in A.D. 1816 and Jammu Raj was annexed to Lahore Kingdom. But this direct occupation of Dogra territory was much resented by the Jammu people, who were already in revolt every where since 1810. The leaders of this revolt were Mian Dido in Jammu Hills and Mian Diwan Singh in Riasi-Akhnur region. A number of expeditions under the command of Prince Kharak Singh, Bhayya Ram Singh, Diwan Bhawani Dass and others were sent for the suppression of revolts. But affairs of Jammu could not be properly settled and the discontent gathered momentum. The rising had become general and had spread to the Hills beyond Jammu and the territories west of the Chenab, so that news came in April, 1817 that Diwan Singh had annexed the country on the other side of Jammu to his possessions thereby enlisting the *zamindars* of that district and creating a serious disturbance.<sup>59</sup> The regions of Deva Batala also became

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59. W. L. M' Gregor : *Hist of the Punjab*, p. 188.

restless and Chibs and Bhows raised insurrection. Although Ranjit Singh adopted strenuous measures, burnt down Deva Batala and other strongholds of the rebels, pressed Dido and Diwan Singh hard and perpetrated the most inhuman atrocities on the rebels who were caught, yet the republican spirit of the Dogras could not be broken in. Rather it became the more defiant. This defiant spirit of the Dogras could only be pacified when Ranjit Singh decided to make an end to the direct Sikh rule in Dogra Hills and handed over Jammu and its dependencies to the Dogra family to which Maharaja Gulab Singh belonged.

The task of liberation and unification of Jammu State under a compact political unit was left to the courage, sagacity, and political genius of Gulab Singh. When he started his career as a petty cavalry officer in Sikh service in A.D. 1809, Jammu Kingdom had broken up into a score of discordant and fragile principalities. Bhadarwa and Kishtwar had become independent whereas Basohli, Bhadu and Jasrota, had, after enjoying a few years of autonomy, fallen under Sikh control. Principalities to the west of the Chenab, like Rajauri, Bhimber and Punch, had also severed their relations with Jammu Raj and were waiting to be conquered by Ranjit's officers. Jammu itself had lost, not only its independence, but also its premier position as the nucleus of the Dogra State.

Gulab Singh as a military commander<sup>60</sup> in Ranjit Singh's army rendered meritorious services to his master in the campaigns of Atak Fort<sup>61</sup> and Garh-Dhamala.<sup>62</sup> in 1812. He also distinguished himself in Ranjit Singh's first expedition to Kashmir in 1813. For these services the family received *jagirs* of Kharoti, Bhandian and Beol, and later on, of Lala-Chobara and Ramgarh.<sup>63</sup> Soon afterwards Gulab Singh conquered Riasi for Ranjit Singh and suppressed the rebellion of Mian Diwan Singh and Mian Bhup Singh in that quarter in 1815.<sup>64</sup>

In the frontier campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh between 1815 and 1819 Gulab Singh played a prominent and noteworthy part.<sup>65</sup> The most important were those of Multan and the Yusufzais during A. D. 1819. The same year a Sikh force was sent against Aghar Khan, the

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60 For detailed discussion on the subject see the author's *Gulabnama*, p. 60-66

61. *Gulabnama*, p. 114 ; C. H. Payne : *A Short Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 95.

62. *Gulabnama*, p. 114.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 116-17 ; G. C. Smyth : *Hist. of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 254.

64. *Gulabnama*, pp. 122-22.

65. K. M. Panikkar : *The Founding of Kashmir State*, 25.

rebellious Raja of Rajauri, the command of which was conferred on Gulab Singh. He amazingly succeeded in over-running the country and capturing him by a bold stratagem.<sup>66</sup> In the following year Kishtwar was acquired by him for Ranjit Singh through sheer diplomacy without a bullet shot.

For these and similar services the principality of Jammu along with Patti Bhoti, Chaneni, Samarta and Bandralta were conferred on the Jamwal family as a fief by an agreement signed in November, 1820<sup>67</sup>. Kishtwar was also put under Gulab Singh's supervision. The family also undertook to capture, kill, or drive away the rebel leader, Mian Dido. The undertaking was honoured soon afterwards and Mian Dido was killed in an expedition undertaken against him by Gulab Singh personally. Peace and security was soon restored in the lands given to the family in *jagirs*, and the grateful Sikh monarch exalted Gulab Singh to the Raj of these territories with capital at Jammu, and honoured him with the title of 'Raja'. The '*Raj-Tilak*' was bestowed by Ranjit Singh himself on June 17, 1822<sup>68</sup> (4th Asadh, 1819 Bikrami). By the same deed the government of Ramnagar-Bandralta was entrusted to his younger brother, Mian Suchet Singh. On June 20, 1827, Gulab Singh's younger brother, Raja Dhian Singh, was also made Raja and the chiefship (Raj-o-Riyasat) of the country of Bhimber and Chibhal, including Punch, was granted to him in perpetuity.<sup>69</sup> In 1834, the principality of Jasrota was granted to Raja Dhian Singh's eldest son, Raja Hira Singh.

Thus the scattered units of the former Jammu kingdom began to be coalesced together and the foundation of the future Jammu and Kashmir State was laid during the third decade of the nineteenth century under the able leadership of Gulab Singh whose sane and serene diplomacy outwitted even the seasoned British 'politicals' of the Victorian era.

Having become de facto ruler of these territories Gulab Singh now sought to extend his conquests still farther into the northern mountains. After consolidating his position in Kishtwar, he conquered Zanskar, Padar, Purig, Ladakh and Baltistan and parts of Gilgit, and also sought to annex western Tibet in which endeavour he met with disaster and his general, Zorawar Singh, was killed and his army annihilated. These conquests of the Dogras have been described in detail in the following pages.

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66. S. M. Latif : *History of the Punjab*, p. 421 ; *Gulabnama*, p. 107.

67. National Archives, Patiala, Document No , M/503.

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Ibid.*, Document No. M/507.

Ultimately, when the Sikhs were defeated in the first Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46) and Gulab Singh played an important role in bringing about an honourable settlement for the Lahore Darbar and the British Governor-General, the latter confirmed him in his possessions and added Kashmir Valley to his dominion by an agreement of March 16, 1846, and thereby acknowledged him the Maharaja of the newly created Jammu and Kashmir State.

The credit for the creation and consolidation of Jammu and Kashmir State goes to Maharaja Gulab Singh. This State will ever remain a monument of his political and diplomatic skill and military genius, and its Himalayan territories will always stand as immortal memorial of his great General, Wazir Zorawar Singh, who cheerfully bore the privations and hardships of lofty mountains for the sake of the honour of the Dogra land.

Gulab Singh was a very remarkable statesman<sup>71</sup> ; the very best of soldiers, bold and energetic, yet wise and prudent commander, relying much on his subtle political talent, and looking at arms as his last recourse<sup>71</sup>. In the field of battle he was self-composed, watchful and prudent to the last degree. Even the British Governor-General, Hardinge, admitted that "as a soldier he is brave and has no personal vices."<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Zorawar Singh was brave and fearless commander, blessed with the ability of inspiring his soldiers to breast the worst perils. Most of Gulab Singh's success and greatness was due to Zorawar's martial genius and strategy, It was a happy companionship of both these Dogra leaders which has brought honour to the Dogras and a big addition to India's territorial gains.

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70. Hugh Pearse : *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*. p. 209.

71. *Ibid*, p. 210.

72 *Hardinge to Hobhouse*, 22 October 1846.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Gulab Singh Dogra and Wazir Zorawar Singh – Early Exploits*

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Gulab Singh was fortunate in being bestowed, in addition to personal valour and perseverance, with the sagacity of choosing the right man for the right job. The genuineness of his selection of men is evident from the fact that the confidence he reposed in his associates was seldom betrayed. This circumstance led to his spectacular success in the sphere of diplomacy and military achievements. During the first decade of his military service in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, from about 1810 to 1820, he incessantly participated personally in numerous military campaigns, led many expeditions, and from his personal experience and study of men, gathered around him talented persons, gave them his unreserved confidence, trusted them as friends and associates and in return won their unswerving loyalty, devotion and readiness to sacrifice themselves for his cause. Men like Diwan Jawala Sahai, Wazir Zorawar Singh, Diwan Hari Chand, Diwan Lakhpat Rai, Mehta Basti Ram, Sheikh Sodagar, Wazir Ratnu, Sheikh Mahi-ud-Din, General Hoshiara and a number of leaders of his own clan, as well as his own talented brothers—Raja Dhian Singh and Raja Sochet Singh—all gave him unflinching co-operation and respect for his political sagacity. Staying at Lahore, or Jammu or Peshawar he guided his associates; and all his military commanders and civil officers sought his counsels, carried out his orders and materialised his plans as their own. Infact he had established a sort of corporate executive for the fulfilment of his dream of a Dogra principality within Ranjit's kingdom or even out of it, if necessary. Such a wise selection of his officers and generals was chiefly the cause of his success which was always supported by his undaunted valour and readiness to fight for his cause if circumstances so required and the behaviour of men was such as he considered contrary to his plans.

#### **The Conqueror from Kahlur.**

The most outstanding of his officers were Diwan Jawala Sahai and Wazir Zorawar Singh.

If Jawala Sahai was Gulab Singh's right hand man in diplomacy and statecraft, Zorawar Singh was his counterpart in military exploits and conquests. It was Zorawar Singh "who translated his master's hazy dreams into cold reality by embarking on the conquest of Ladakh and Western Tibet and contemplating even that of Yarkand".<sup>1</sup> He was remarkable among his contemporaries for his absolute financial honesty.<sup>2</sup> He never accepted a present (*nazrana*) from anybody, and whatever was offered to him he forwarded to his master. He carried this principle to such a length that he only wore clothes that the Maharaja gave him and was contented always with a very meagre salary.<sup>3</sup> As may be supposed he soon became a favourite with the Raja, "who was as much astonished as pleased to find that he had a servant who could resist alike the temptations of presents from himself and bribe from others."<sup>4</sup> His honesty and devotion to duty led to his rapid rise from the rank of a private soldier to that of a '*Hakim*' or Governor, and afterwards '*Wazir*' or a general. He was "infused with the spirit of his master, to whom he was absolutely faithful; and it was probably on his suggestion that the conquest of the Indus Valley was undertaken."<sup>5</sup>

Zorawar Singh hailed from Kahlur, also called Bilaspur, a small Rajput State in the Siwalik, now integrated in Himachal Pradesh. He was born in 1786 in a Rajput family of Kahlur.<sup>6</sup> He was probably "a son of the Raja of Kahlur."<sup>7</sup> According to the Urdu biography<sup>8</sup> of Zorawar Singh, at the age of sixteen he killed his cousin over a property feud, and escaped to Haridwar. Here he happened to meet Rana Jaswant Singh, a *jagirdar* of Marmehti in Doda, and accompanied him to his jagir in Kishtwar as a private servant. Here he got the opportunity of learning the art of archery and swordsmanship in the traditional manner of Rajput youths.

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1. P. Mehra in Foreword to C. L. Datta's "*Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*", p. xiv.

2.-3. K. M, Panikhar : *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, p. 167.

4. G. C. Smyth : *A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, pp. 198-199.

5. Hutchion & Vogel ; *HPHS* p. 555.

6. Nargis, Narsing Das ; *Zorawar Singh* (in Urdu) p. 7.

7. Hutchison & Vogel : *HPHS* p. 555. G. C. Smyth, however, gave a different version of Zorawar Singh's origin. He writes : "The celebrated minister and military leader under Gooloub Singh, who is sometimes improperly called Zorover Singh but properly Zoroveroo, was a native of Kussal ; near the fortress of Reharsee (Riasi) in the hills beyond Jammoo." (*A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*. p. 198).

8. See Nargis, Narsing Das : *Zorawar Singh*, p. 8.



Soon afterwards Zorawar Singh joined service as a private soldier<sup>9</sup> with the *Kiladar* of Reasi,<sup>10</sup> an officer of Gulab Singh Dogra. Being well acquainted with the country and people around, he soon rendered himself particularly useful to the *Kiladar* and won his favour. Finding him intelligent, the *Kiladar* frequently employed him in carrying message to his master, Gulab Singh. It was on one of these occasions, that Gulab Singh first became acquainted with the merits of Zorawar Singh. In those days, every man in the hill forts received one *pukka* seer of flour a day, which being more than they could eat, at least one-third of the quantity was sold by them. Thus great loss was being suffered by Gulab Singh. Zorawar Singh pointed out this defect and also placed before him a scheme by which considerable saving could be effected. Gulab Singh who was quick to appreciate merit, accepted his proposal and entrusted him with the task of carrying out the scheme, in which he was so successful that he was appointed inspector of commissariat supplies in all the forts north of Jammoo.<sup>11</sup> During these days, in the beginning of Samvat 1875 (April-May, 1814) the jagir of Reasi, which had previously been confirmed on Mian Diwan Singh,<sup>12</sup> was transferred to Gulab Singh's management, who took in hand the construction of a new fort at Riassi named Bhingarh, in order to keep the rebel companions of the dispossessed Mian in Check. Zorawar Singh had been deputed there "for the completion of the task".<sup>13</sup> When Mian Bhup Dev, son of Diwan Singh, and other rebels besieged the fort, Zorawar Singh defended it heroically and foiled their attempts to occupy it. Gulab Singh himself reached there and compelled the rebels to lift the siege and take shelter in hills and jungles. After about a year's

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9. G. C. Smyth ; *A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 198.

10. Riassi is a small town on the left bank of the river Chenab in Jammu division. It has a fort built on a conical rock which is fairly unapproachable (*Imperial Gazet.*, xii. 56-7)

11. G. C. Smyth : *A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 198.

12. Mian Diwan Singh was the jagirdar of Riassi under the last Raja of Jammu. But Riassi was conquered by the Sikhs with the help of Mian Mota, the 'madar-ul-maham' or minister of Jammu and Mian Diwan Singh was retained as jagirdar. He, however, was instrumental in the murder of Mian Mota in 1813 and was therefore under cloud. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, therefore, transferred his jagir to Gulab Singh. The Mian turned a rebel, was captured and imprisoned at Lahore. His son Mian Bhup Dev, took up cudgel. The unrest continued upto 1817, when Gulab Singh with the help of Zorawar Singh, re-established law and order See *Monogram No. 17*, Pb. Govt. Rec. Office Publication.

13. *Gulabnama*, p. 126.

operation Gulab Singh succeeded in stamping out sedition. He entrusted Zorawar Singh with the administration of Riasi.<sup>14</sup> His success as administrator and commandant of commissariat supplies led him to quick rise from one appointment to another, until he became Governor, with almost 'irresponsible power, over all Kussal (Khashal) and Kishtwar',<sup>15</sup> most probably in 1821.<sup>16</sup>

Eventually, when Gulab Singh became the jagirdar of Jammu in 1820, Zorawar Singh received the title and office of 'Wazir' with full power to levy and direct forces as he pleased for the conquest of the independent states around.<sup>17</sup> "While he was thus winning provinces and hoarding wealth for his parton", writes Smyth, "he exercised the most rigid selfdenial towards himself. He had never drawn pay from the time of his first interview with the Rajah ; he wore no clothes but those sent to him by his master ; .....even his wife and children he left dependent on the Rajah for their daily subsistence. But he had his reward in the favour and admiration of his master, and in the unlimited confidence which that master placed in him."<sup>18</sup> He had another conspicuous peculiarity. He seldom wrote to the Raja to tell him of his successes. The tributes and revenue collected were sent post haste to Jammu, and Gulab Singh had to discover from it what new country his general had conquered.<sup>19</sup>

Zorawar Singh was not only a spectacular conqueror. He was a keen organiser of his conquests also. In his case conquest and consolidation went hand in hand. His experience of economy in civil and military affairs, better administration and prompt organisation gathered at Riasi, strengthened with years. When he was made the Governor of Kishtwar in 1821, he carried out many reforms there. He got the land measured and fixed the state revenue at fifty percent of the produce.<sup>20</sup> He also introduced some judicial reforms there,<sup>21</sup> thereby giving a proof of his hold over civil affairs as well. Further he perfected the military machine of Raja Gulab Singh. The lofty mountains of Kishtwar provided Dogra armies an opportunity of training in high altitude warfare

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14. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

15. G. C. Smyth : *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p 199.

16. *Gulabnama*, sec. (19) 2n.

17. G. C. Smyth : *A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 199.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

19. K. M. Panikkar : *The Founding of Kashmir State*, p 168.

20. Shivji Dhar, Pandit : *Tarikh-i-Kishtwar*, p. 53.

21. *Ibid.*

## 46 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

and equipped them with knowledge required for further conquests in the greater Himalayas, Ladakh, Baltistan and Tibet. His relentless essays for subduing sky high mountains and snowy valleys and cold plains situated over 14,000 feet above sea, rendered him an object of dread among the people inhabiting the countries that lie along the further base of the Snowy Range, and it was not without reason that they regarded his progress with alarm.<sup>22</sup> "Inexorably cruel and pitiless," writes Smyth, "was Wuzeer Zoroveroo in pursuing the interests of his master."<sup>23</sup> His boldness of designs and fearless execution of plans among the unscanned high plateaus and desolate frozen plains marked him out as one of the talented generals which India had ever produced. Most of the important conquests of Maharaja Gulab Singh were achieved by him, and a large new territory was added to India's northern frontier by him the like of which had never been done since the days of Chandragupta Maurya. He is the main character in the drama of Gulab Singh's conquests, and his career gathers more romance with the passage of time like the legends of the ancients.

### **Conquest of Kishtwar by Gulab Singh**

Gulab Singh had acquired vast territory in the form of jagirs. Beol, Bhandian and Kharoti had been given to him by Maharaja Ranjit Singh as early as 1813. Soon after this he received the management of Lala-Chobara and Ramgarh. Ismailpur and Deoly, and Dansal had already descended on the family from their ancestors. Riasi was acquired in jagir by him soon after, in 1815. But the year 1820 was the most auspicious one for the entire family when the *talluqa* Jammu with the exception of the territory to the south of Kashmir, and along with Patti Bhoti, Bandralta, Chenani and Kishtwar was granted as jagir to the whole family.<sup>24</sup>

This grant also gave the family power to conquer and add new territories to their jagirs, and the Dogra family accepted the condition that ; "Whenever there is any increase in territory through the grace of Satgur Ji, it will be reported to His Majesty".<sup>25</sup>

Though Kishtwar had been conferred on the Dogra family as a part of the jagir, this territory was yet not in possession of Ranjit Singh.

22. G. C. Smyth : *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 200.

23. G. C. Smyth : *A History of Reigning Family of Lahore*, p. 200.

24. *MS No. M/503, State Archives, Patiala.*

25. *Ibid.*

Gulab Singh was required to conquer it and make it a part of Jammu jagir.

Kishtwar is a charming plain in the midst of the mountains, not perfectly level, but undulating, everywhere cultivated, dotted with villages. This plain, which is about four miles in length from north to south and two miles across, is bounded on the east and north by mountains which make part of the range that bounds Kashmir on the south. The plain or the plateau of Kishtwar is 5300 or 5400 feet above the sea. Unlike most of the flatter openings among the hills, it is not mere a plain, nor a terraced slope, but it has little eminences and undulations ; nearly all is under cultivation. The villages are shaded by plane-trees and by fruit-trees, leading from one hamlet to another are hedge-rowed lanes, with white and yellow and red rose and other shrubs. By the town was a beautiful piece of smooth, nearly level, turf, half a mile long and a furlong broad, called the Chaugan, a place in former times kept for polo playing. The valley which lies hemmed in by Chamba on the south, Ladakh to the west and Burdwan range of Kashmir mountain to the north, is approached along the valley of Chenab, from Ramban, through Doda and Jangalwar, or direct from Bhadarwah, across mountain range to Jangalwar.

“The small town of Kishtwar”, writes F. Drew in 1875, about 55 years after its conquest by Gulab Singh, “is dirty, and dilapidated. There are about 200 houses, including a bazaar with some shops ; but there was a complete absence of life, of the busy cheerfulness one sees in some bazaars. The people seem to have been brought to a low stage of poverty from having in former years been given over to the *Wazir* family, which still holds much influence here. Two large houses, built after the fashion of the houses of the richer people in Kashmir, which belong to that family, are exceptions to the general state of decay. There is an old fort, on a little rising ground, oblong, with corner towards and other projecting buildings, it is manned by some thirty men”.<sup>26</sup>

26. F. Drew : *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, p. 118.

The inhabitants of Kishtwar are more than half Kashmiries, who seem to have settled here only some generations before its conquest by Dogras. The rest are Hindus of the Thakar, Karar, Gaddi and other castes. The Kashmiries here also carry on their shawl work. The climate of Kishtwar is something like Bhadarwah, but it is somewhat warmer, and must have a less fall of rain and snow. Snow falls during the four winter months. The fruits produced are apple, quince, three kinds of pear, plum, a few apricots, cherry, peach grapes, mulberry and walnut,

Kishtwar<sup>27</sup> was probably ruled by Rajput Rajas from at least the middle ages. Most of its history has its roots in legends very much similar to that of Kashmir. Its first historical ruler seem to be Raja Kahn Pal of solar race, a scion of the Gaur-Bengal ruling family, who established his rule in Kishtwar in the last quarter of the fifth century A D. The descendents of Kahn Pal seem to have peacefully ruled upto the middle of the sixteenth century, when the throne passed to Rai Bhan (1540-1560 AD).<sup>28</sup> During his reign Kashmir had been conquered by a Mughal general of Humayun, Mirza Haidar, in about 1541 A.D. Mirza Haidar led his Mughal army against Kishtwar in 1547 but was completely defeated, and the descendents of Rai Bhan continued to rule in Kishtwar under the shadow of a Mohanmadan attack. Ultimately Kishtwar lost its independence in 1572 A.D. when its ruler Bahadur Singh was defeated by Ali Shah Chak and forced to accept the suzerainty of Kashmir, which was soon abrogated. During the reign of Partap Singh (1605-1618) Jahangir sent a force to reduce Kishtwar which plundered and destroyed the valley and retired. Partap Singh came back and reoccupied Kishtwar. After him Gur Singh (1618-29) and Jagat Singh (1629-35) ruled in Kishtwar. The latter was ousted from his throne by Raja Bhupat Pal of Balaor (Basohli) and was killed in an effort to re-gain his throne. At this Bhagwan Singh, the brother of the deceased Raja, who lived at Delhi as a hostage in the Mughal Court, got imperial help and drove away the occupation force of the Balaurias and became Raja (1636-50). He was followed by his son Maha Singh (1650-56) on the throne. Since the days of Bhagwan Singh Kishtwar became tributary to Mughal emperors.

The next ruler, Jai Singh (1656-64) probably embraced Islam and took the title of Bakhtiar Khan. Then came Raja Kirat Singh (1664-1685) who was also called a disciple of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who gave

27. The valley of Kistwar or Kishtwar, anciently known as Kasthavata, lies to the south-east of Kashmir, on the upper Chinab. Kashtwar principality seem to have been founded in the first half of the tenth century by a cadit of the Sena family of Gaur in Bengal of which branches rule in Suket, Mandi, Keonthal. The state is mentioned under the name of Kashtawata in the *Rajatarangini* as a separate hill-state in the time of King Kalasa of Kashmir and subject to it in the eleventh century. The ruling family, which was Hindu and embraced Islam in the reign of Aurangzeb, practically retained its independence untill the conquest of their territory by Maharaja Gulab Singh,

M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Bk. vii, s. 588-90, p. 431; Hutchison and Vogel, *HPHS*, p. 48.

28. Hashmat Ullah Khan; *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 135-147.

him the new name and title of Raja Sa'adat Yar Khan. This conversion seems to have been followed by that of a certain number, but by no means majority, of the Kishtwar people. No doubt many of the servants of the Raja turned Muhammadans with him. The Rajas who followed on the 'gaddi' of Kishtwar continued to take Rajput names as well as receive Muslim titles from the Emperor of Delhi. Next came Raja Amluk Singh (1723-1771) who received the title of Raja Sa'adatmand Khan. Then came Raja Mihr Singh called S'aidmand Khan (1771-1778). Then came Raja Sujhan Singh; then Raja Inayat Ulla Singh (1784-1791), and lastly, Raja Muhammad Tegh Singh (1791-1820), also called Saif Ulla Khan.

In between the reign of Raja Sujhan Singh and Inait Ulla Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Dev (1732-1782) of Jammu established his sway over Kishtwar. He sent his representative to Kishtwar to set the administration in order. This was Lal Dev who ruled there for two years and annoyed the people by his oppressions. This direct rule of Jammu over Kishtwar, however, came to an end with the death of Ranjit Dev in 1782, when Inaitullah Singh was secretly liberated from the Bahu fort, and he drove away Lal Dev with the help of the leaders of Soraj and Kainthi.<sup>29</sup> Ranjit Dev seems to have made Kishtwar his tributary during his expeditions to Kashmir Valley in about 1769 A.D.

Kishtwar had freed itself from the sway of Jammu on Ranjit Dev's death but soon it became subject to Delhi. Raja Tegh Singh was the last independent ruler of Kishtwar. Down to his time the descendants of the two Wazirs sent from Delhi were serving the family. But Raja Tegh Singh made his chief adviser a Thakar, named Lakhpat, who till then was a small landholder. He gave him the title of Wazir also and bestowed on him the jagir of Bonjua. This Lakhpat became a source of trouble for Raja Tegh Singh and ultimately led to his downfall.

Gulabnamah tells us that when Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir Valley in 1819, Gulab Singh, who had taken an active part in the expedition, reminded him that his ancestors Maharaja Ranjit Dev had received a jagir<sup>30</sup> in the valley from Ahemad Shah Durrani in return for the help the Maharaja gave the Durrani in conquering the valley from the rebel Afghan governor Raja Sukhjiwan. In lieu of that jagir Gulab Singh wanted Kishtwar which the Sikh chief was too glad to bestow on him this territory which did not yet belong to him.

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29. Hashmatullah Khan, pp. 176-77.

30. *Gulabnama* p.

But the potent cause for assignment of Kishtwar to the Dogras seems to be that the Raja of that place had specially incurred the displeasure of Maharaja Ranjit Singh by giving shelter to Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, the refugee king of Kabul. The king had been in the hands of Ranjit at Lahore from where, in April, 1815 Shah Shuja himself made his escape in disguise. A reward was offered for recovery of the prisoner, who succeeded in reaching the hills, where he was hospitably received by the petty Raja of Kishtwar. Ranjit sent word to the Raja to forward the refugee to him as a prisoner which he declined to do.<sup>31</sup>

Here the ex-ruler collected a body of 3000/4000 men and entered Kashmir by Mirbal Pass in the winter. But the cold marred his advance and his troops dispersed. His scheme of conquering Kashmir miserably failed. At the same time it revealed his presence in Kishtwar. Ranjit Singh sent word to Raja Mohammad Togh Singh to forward the refugee to him as prisnor which the host declined to do, but it became necessary for Shah Shuja to leave his protector. After a long and circuitous journey, with few followers and fewer comforts, over the snowy ranges to Zanskar, and marching along the Chamba and Kulu mountains at the back of it, Shah Shuja came over in to Kulu and made his way down to Ludhiana where he reached in September, 1816 and placed himself under the protection of the British Government.<sup>32</sup>

This Shah Shuja affair antagonised Ranjit to Raja Mohammad Togh Singh of Kishtwar and the former was looking out for an opportunity of taking revenge on the latter. When Gulab Singh asked for Kishtwar, which was yet an independent principality, in no way a part of Ranjit's kingdom, the Sikh ruler was pleased to entrust conquest to the Dogra chief and conferred it as a part of the Jammu jagir on the Dogra family on 29th November, 1820.<sup>33</sup>

31. Drew : *Jammoo and Kashmir Territories*, pp. 121-22 ;  
Anon : *History of the Punjab, Vol. II*, pp. 21-22.

32. Anon : *History of the Punjab, Vol. II*, pp. 21-22 ;  
Drew : *Jammoo and Kashmir Territories*, pp. 21-22 ;  
Hashmat ulla, p. 183 ;  
N. K. Sinha : *Ranjit Singh*, p. 195.

33. Ms. M/503, N. A. Patiala, the grant included taluqa Chakla Jammu, Patti, Bhoti, Bandrahalta, Cheneni, and Kishtwar. "It is interesting to note that the new 'jagirdar' had actually to conquer this tract (Kishtwar) at the time of this grant"—J S. Grewal and Indu Banga : "*Ranjit Singh, The Suzerain*"

*Procdgs : Punjab History Con 5th Session, 1970, p. 84, fn. 13.*

Immediately after the conferment of the jagir in November, 1820 Gulab Singh made arrangements for the conquest of Kishtwar, but the expedition had to be put off till next spring on the advice of Birbal Dhar.<sup>34</sup> Gulab Singh seems to have used the intermediary period in a successful attempt to sow seeds of dissension midst the Raja and the Wazir of Kishtwar. Gulabnama states that as an act of diplomacy some 'parwanas' were written in the name of Wazir Lakhpat Rai, the administrator of the Raja of Kishtwar. One of them ran, "Your application was duly received. The contents received high consideration. So should you in the same manner sincerely occupy and present yourself in our service, and be assured of high favours on your circumstances". Dewan Kirpa Ram clearly states that Lakhpat Rai had written no such letters. The object of writing these fabricated letters was "only to breed suspicion in the heart of the Raja of Kishtwar" against his able and loyal Wazir.

The device had the desired effect. One day a 'parwana' fell into the hands of an informer who presented it before Raja Tegh Singh. This bred misunderstanding, and the offended Raja secretly ordered for the Dewan's murder. The latter, however, escaped, after sustaining slight injuries only, to Jangalwar and thence probably to Jammu in the presence of Gulab Singh, and put him upto annexing Kishtwar, showing how easily it could be done.<sup>35</sup>

According to Hashmat Ullah Khan<sup>36</sup> Lakhpat Rai escaped to Bhadarwah which was then subject to Chamba. After some time he went to Jammu, in the service of Gulab Singh. This offered Gulab Singh an opportunity he was waiting for. In the beginning of 1878 or May 1821 A.D.<sup>37</sup> Gulab Singh personally led his armies for the conquest of Kishtwar.

34. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnama*, pp. 140-42.

35. Cf. Crew, p. 120. "This man (Lakhpat) came to have a quarrel with his master, and I have heard something about the Raja drawing on him and wounding him. At all events Wazir Lakhpat fled from Kishtwar and came to Raja Gulab Singh, at Jammu, and put him upto annexing Kishtwar, showing how easily it could be done. Gulab Singh brought a force to Doda and there he was met by the Raja who, without fighting, gave himself up. He went to Lahore, to Ranjit Singh's Court."

36. Hashmat ullah Khan : *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 185 86.

37. Dewan Kirpa Ram has given the date 1877 which is deficient by one year. The confirmant of Jammu jagir, including Kishtwar, took place in Maghar, v. s. 1877 and the 'quābuliat'—deed of acceptance was signed by the family on 15 Maghar, sammat 1877, corresponding to 29th, November, 1820 : *Document No. M/503*, N. A. Patiala. The conquest of Kishtwar was, therefore, effected a short time after this, during 1878-or A.D. 1821.



On the way he reduced Balwala and compelled Raja Dial Chand of Cheneni to accompany him on the conquest of Kishtwar. The Chenab was crossed by a device and his armies reached Doda. The escape of the Wazir had left Tegh Singh resourceless and torn by internal dissensions. Doda fell without a fight. Now Tegh Singh thought it prudent to wait upon Gulab Singh at Doda and he submitted without a show of fight. Gulab Singh received him kindly and sent him to Lahore, where the ex-ruler was treated unkindly. Consequently he died there under mysterious circumstances. Gulab Singh left Mian Chain Singh as 'Amil' (administrator) of Kishtwar.

Thus was that ancient state subverted and acquired without firing a shot. This feat of diplomacy was probably done by Gulab Singh during May or June, before the commencement of rains. "In April (1821) Ranjeet moved to Adenanugur, and remained there till July, occupied in collecting the hill tribute. The two petty territories of Kishtwar and Mankot were, in this interval, annexed to the Khalsa."<sup>38</sup> Gulab Singh had thus proved himself an ardent disciple of the ancient sam-dam-dand-bhed school of diplomacy which lies in the maximum economy in the use of resources with the minimum loss of manpower, yet leading to the attainment of astonishing success. Thorburn has justifiably assessed, ".....his master (Ranjit Singh) had employed him in an enterprise the successful execution of which required considerable finesse—the peaceful acquisition of Kishtwar, a hill principality. The mission was carried out with such tact - the state being siezed by artifice and its ruler deported to Lahore and there quietly poisoned—that Gulab Singh's grateful sovereign bestowed Jammu upon him in jagir."<sup>39</sup> When Gulab Singh became the Raja of Jammu in June 1822, he appointed Zorawar Singh the Hakim or governor of Kishtwar and exalted him with the title of Wazir.<sup>40</sup>

When Gulab Singh conquered Kishtwar he had become not only a big grandee of the Lahore State, but had also become the Raja of his hereditary principality of Jammu, and a vassal of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His Raj included besides Jammu, Bhoti, Bandarlta, Bhadarwah, Riasi, Akhnoor, Samba and Kishtwar. His younger brother, Dhian Singh, had been exalted to the office of 'Deodhiwala' (Lord Chamberlain) of Ranjit Singh's court and palace, and the youngest brother, Suchet Singh, had

38. Anon ; *History of the Punjab Vol, II*, p. 60.

Henry T. Prinsep : *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 102.

39. S. S. Thorburn : *The Punjab in Peace and War*, 1883, p. 29.

40. G. C. Smyth : *A History of the Resigning Family of Lahore*, p. 199.

also been made Raja of Ramnagar and Basohli. All these states were administered by Raja Gulab Singh, who while administering those of his brothers, added more to his own.<sup>41</sup>

The acquisition of Kishtwar had a special significance for Gulab Singh. Once this territory had formed part of the Dogra Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Dev; hence its annexation to Jammu principality rounded off the old Dogra possessions on that side. At the same time it opened the gateway to Gulab Singh's further conquests across the Inner Himalayas which were to follow soon after. Zorawar Singh and his Dogra soldiers who controlled and administered Kishtwar became habitual to the cold climate and the hardy life in lofty mountains and narrow deep valleys and gorges and gradually prepared themselves for further advance towards north and east in the snowy ranges, frozen plateaus and the hostile Himalayan territories. In a way Kishtwar served as a spring-board from which Zorawar Singh leapt on his career of conquests and military exploits which marked him out as one of the great generals and military strategists which India's martial community has ever produced. It was through Kishtwar that he advanced towards Ladakh, Baltistan and Tibet and made a history in the annals of warfare. Later on, the acquisition of Kishtwar came out to be the first step on the part of Gulab Singh towards the encirclement of Kashmir Valley on the north, east and south and thereby bring it under his own sphere of influence. Zorawar Singh had been particularly instrumental in these military transactions of Raja Gulab Singh and shares most of the credit with his master for success in the creation and expansion of Jammu principality.

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41. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### *In the Heart of Himalayas and Beyond*

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Ladakh, or La-dvags (as it is pronounced locally); the northern neighbour of Kashtwar, was the next target of the Dogra conquerors. Ladakh' is the most common name of the country ; but it is also called MAR-YUL (low land or Red-land), and KHA-PAN-CHA, or Snow-land, both of which names are used by the old Chinese travellers.<sup>1</sup> Fa-hian (AD 412) calls the kingdom KIE-CHHA, whereas Yuan-Chwang (A.D. 640) calls it MA-LO-PHO, or Snow-land.

Ladakh is the most westerly country occupied by the Tibetan race who call themselves Bot-pa and profess the Buddhist faith under a peculiar heirarchy of Monks called Lamas. On the north it is divided by the Karakoram mountains from the Chinese district of Khotan. To the east and south-east are the Chinese districts of Rudok and Chumurti (which once formed part of the great Ladkhi Empire) ; and to the south are the districts of Lahul and Spiti (now attached to the Kulu Division of Himachal Pradesh) formerly belonging to Ladakh.<sup>2</sup> To the west lie Kashmir and Balti, the former separated by the western Himalayas, and the latter by an imaginary line drawn from the mouth of the Dras river to the source of the Nubra river.<sup>3</sup>

Ladakh is one of the most elevated regions of the earth. The average height above the sea level being about 12,000 feet. Enormous mountain peaks ranging from 25,000 to 28,000 feet lend majesty to the ice-clad mountain ranges which encircle it."<sup>4</sup> Its different valleys lie

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1. A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, 1853, p. 18-19.

2. *Ibid.* p. 17-18.

3. Moorcraft (*Trevels*), p. 155) describes the boundries of Ladakh as under : "Ladakh is bounded on the north-east by the mountains which divide it from the Chinese province of Khoten, and on the east and south-east by Rodokh and Chan-then, dependencies of Lassa ; on the south by the British province of Bisahar, and by the hill states of Kulu and Chamba. The latter also extends along the south-west till it is met by Kashmir, which with part of Balti Kartaksha, and Khafalun, complete the boundary on the west and the north-west. The north is bound by the Karakoram mountains and Yarkand".

along the head-waters of the Indus, the Sutlej and the Chenab ; and the joint effects of elevation and of isolation amidst snowy mountains produce perhaps the most singular climate in the known world. Burning heat by day is succeeded by piercing cold at night, and everything is parched by the extreme dryness of the air.

“The general aspect of Ladakh is extreme *barrenness*. Seen from above, the country would appear a mere succession of yellow plains and barren mountains capped with snow, and the lakes of Pangkong, and Tshomo Riri would seem like bright oasis amidst a vast desert of rock and sand. No trace of men or human habitations would meet the eye ; and even the larger spots of cultivated land would be but specks on the mighty waste of a deserted world. But a closer view would show many fertile tracts along the rivers, covered with luxuriant crops, and many picturesque monasteries, from which the chant of human voices ascends on high in daily prayers and praise. The yellow plains along the Indus would then be covered with flocks of the shawlwool goat, and all the principal thoroughfares of the country dotted with numerous flocks of sheep laden with the merchandise of China and Tibet.”<sup>4</sup>

Its climate is characterised by great extremes of heat and cold, and by excessive dryness. In the elevated districts of Rukshu it freezes almost every night during summer. But in Spiti the noonday sun is still 15° hotter than in India, while in Ladakh it is about the same. The extremes of cold are equally great, and in the more elevated districts the winters are particularly severe. The extreme of cold is probably between 20 to 30 degrees below zero, and the mean temperature of the winter months cannot be more than a few degrees above zero. The mean annual temperature for the Indus valley is 39°, for Ladakh is 37.5°, of Zanskar and Spiti is above 39°, of Nubra the same, 38° and Purik 42°.

The quantity of rain and snow that fall in Lakakh is exceedingly small. In the more elevated districts of Rukshu, Nubra, Zanskar and Ladakh proper, it rains, or rather drizzles, for an hour or two about three times a year. Snow falls much oftener, but not in any quantity, and in Ladakh and Rukshu, it is never more than six inches deep. In Rukshu it is never more than kneedeep. But in Dras the fall of snow is so great, that by the end of November the Seuji-la (Zojila) Pass into Kashmir is always closed, from which the districts take its Tibetan name of Hem-babs, or “snow-fed”. In Lahul and Spiti, the snow falls to a very great depth, and in many places is doubled by accumulations of drift.

4. K M. Panikkar : *Founding of the Kashmir State*, p. 74.

Heavy showers of rainfall along the Chandra river in Lahul during July and August ; but after the end of September the snow begins to fall in gradually increasing quantities that till November all the passes are fully closed. In Spiti the fall of snow is much less than in Lahul, its greatest depth, where not drifted, being only two feet and a half.

This climate and physical formation of Ladakh and its neighbouring territories is equally favourable for animal life. The plains between 16,000 and 17,000 feet are covered with wild horses and hares and immense flocks of goats and sheep ; and the slopes of the hills upto 19,000 feet abound with marmots and alpine hares. "Such is the extreme dryness of the atmosphere, that no rain falls and but little snow, and both meat and fruits are cured by mere exposure to the air."<sup>5</sup>

The most important part of Ladakh proper is Central Ladakh, through which runs the river Indus. The climate of Ladakh and (Baltistan is dry and healthy. During the major portion of the year the weather is intensely cold Timber and fuel are the most difficult things to obtain. The population lives by agriculture.<sup>6</sup>

*LEH* is the capital of Ladakh which is situated in a narrow valley, formed by the course of the Sinh-Kha-bab (the Indus) and bounded on the northern sides by a double chain of mountains running east and west, the highest of which are from eighteen hundred to two thousand feet above the plains. It is built at the foot and on the slope of some low hills, forming the northern boundry of the valley, and separated by a sandy plain about two miles broad from the river. It is enclosed by a wall, furnished at intervals with conical and square towers, and extending on either side to the summit of the hills. It is approached by a double line of the sacred structures or mains, and houses are scattered over the plains without the walls on either hand. The streets are disposed without any order, and or a most intricate labyrinth, and the houses are built contiguously, and run into each other so strangely, that from without it is difficult to determine the extent of each mansion. The number, it is said is about a thousand ; but I should think they scarcely exceeded five hundred. They vary from one to two or three stories in height, and some are loftier. The walls are in a few instances, wholly, or in part of stone, but in general they are built with large unburnt bricks, they are whitened outside with lime, but remain of their original colour inside.<sup>7</sup>

5. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 17.

6. K. M. Panikkar : *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, p. 74.

7. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels*, reprint, Patiala, pp. 188-89.

The most considerable building in Leh is the palace of the Raja, which has a front of two hundred and fifty feet, and is of several storeys in height, forming a picturesque object on the approach to the city. This, as well as houses in general, diminishes in extent as it rises, and the whole town at a distance has much the appearance of a cluster of houses of cards.<sup>8</sup>

Ladakh was formally a large kingdom which included, in addition to the present Ladakh division of Jammu and Kashmir State, Lahul and Spiti regions of Kulu District of Himachal Pradesh, and the Tibetan Districts called Naris lying to the east of Ladakh upto the Mayum Pass. This kingdom broke up, in the first instance in 1684 as a result of Tibetan war when the Gya'po of Ladakh was compelled to cede the Naris districts to Lhasa. This large kingdom was further reduced in 1846 when Lahul and Spiti were given to Maharaja Gulab Singh as a part of Ladakh. The Government of East India Company felt that by giving the southern dependencies of Ladakh to Maharaja Gulab Singh "they had actually interposed a rival territory between our own provinces on the Sulej and the shawlwool districts of Chang Thang." They therefore made an exchange of territory with the "Maharaja and Spiti was added to the British dominion."<sup>9</sup>

The greatest extent of Ladakh on the eve of its conquest by the Dogras in 1834 was from north-west to south-west, from the head of Dras river to Chibra on the Indus, a distance of about 240 miles. Its greatest breadth was 190 miles from the Karakoram Pass, in the north to the Rohtang Pass in Lahul. Its mean length is about 200 miles and its mean breadth was 150 miles. Its whole area is only 30,000 square miles.<sup>10</sup>

The natural divisions of Ladakh, which also form its political and administrative subdivisions fixed by the natural boundaries formed by the mountain ranges and river courses were the following :—

1. Nubra, on the river Shyok,
2. Ladakh Proper, on the Indus,

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8. *Ibid.* p. 190.

9. A. Cunninagh : *Ladak*, 1853, pp. 18-19.

10. From north to south, or from the foot of the Karakoram mountains to the fort of Trankar in Piti, the distance is rather more than two hundred miles ; and from east to west or from the La Gangkiel pass to that of Zoji La, it cannot be less than two hundred and fifty." *Moorcroft's Travels*, reprint, Patiala. 1970, p. 155.

3. Zanskar, on the Zanskar river,
4. Rukshu, around the lakes of Tshomo Riri and Tsho-Kar,
5. Purig, Suru and Dras, on the different branches of the Dras river,
6. Spiti, on the Spiti river,
7. Lahul, on the Chandra and Bhaga, or head-waters of the Chenab.

1. Nubra (western), or the north western district of Ladakh, it includes all the country drained by Nubra and Shayok rivers. It is by far the largest district in the country being 128 miles in length by 72 miles in breadth, with an area of 9,200 sq.m. It is bounded on the north by the Karakoram mountains, and on the south by the Kailash range, which divides the Indus from the Shayok ; and it extends from the frontier of Balti, in east longitude 77°, to the Pong Kong lake on the borders of Rudok. The mean elevation of the inhabited parts of the country is 12,763 feet.<sup>11</sup>

2. Ladakh is the central and most populous district of the country, from which it is some times called Mangyul, or the "district of many people". It stretches along the Indus in a north westerly direction from Rukchu to the frontier of Balti, a length of 120 miles, with a average breadth of 33 miles. Its area is about 4,000 sq. miles, and the mean elevation of the inhabited portions, as deduced from observations along the Indus, is 11,500 feet.<sup>12</sup>

3. Zanskar, includes all the country lying along the two great branches of the Zanskar river, in a general direction from south-east to north-west. It is bounded by Ladakh on the north, by Rukchu on the east, by Lahul on the south, and by the small districts of Purik and Wanla on the west. The southern boundry is formed by the great Himalayas itself, the western boundry by the transverse range of Singge La, and the northern boundry by the trans-Himalayan chain. Its greatest length is 72 miles, but its mean length is not more than 56 miles, and the mean breadth is about the same, or 55 miles. It has an area of 3,000 sq. miles, and a mean elevation of 13,154 feet, along the course of the valley. The name of Zangs-Kar (Zangs-d-Kar, "copper-white") means "white copper" or brass.<sup>13</sup>

11. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 21.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

4. **Rukchu** is the most elevated district in Ladak, and of the loftiest inhabited regions in the known world. The mean height of the plains determined by A. Cunningham in 1846 and 1847, is 15,634 feet. This is the mean height of the great plain of Kyang, which extends from the foot of the Thung-lung Pass to the fords of the Sum Gal, a length of 35 miles. It is also the height of the plains around the Tsho-kar, or White Lake, and of the long sloping plains from the Ladak ridge to the Para river. Rukchu is bounded on the north by Ladak proper, on the east by the Chinese district of Chumurty, on the south by Lahul and Spiti and on the west by Zanskar. Its length from the Thung-lung Pass to the head of the Hanle river is 90 miles, and its mean breadth about 62 miles, which give an area of 5,500 sq. miles.

5. **Purig, Suru, Dras** are three small districts to the west of Zanskar on the high road between Kashmir and Le. The principal places in Purig are Mulbil, Paskyum, and Sod, each of which once had a petty chief of its own. SURU also owned a petty chief who lived at Lung Kartse the principal place in the valley. The river is sometimes called by this name, but more generally by that of Suru. The Suru river joins the Waka-chu immediately below Karguil. DRAS (Tibetan 'Hem-babs'—"snow fed, or snow descended") is the most westerly of these districts. Its Tibetan name of Hem-babs is descriptive of its most striking peculiarity, as the most snowy district of Ladak. It owes this peculiarity to the great depression in the Himalayas, at the head of the Dras river, which allows the constantly humid vapours of Kashmir to pass to the north of the mountains, where they become condensed by the cold, and are precipitated in rain or snow, according to the season of the year. These small districts extend in length from the frontier of Balti to Zanskar, a distance of 84 miles, and in breadth from the head of the Suru valley to the Photo-La, a distance of 50 miles. The area is 4,200 sq. miles, and the mean height of the inhabited parts is 11,196 feet.<sup>14</sup>

6. **Spiti** is bounded on the north by Rukchu, on the west by Lahul and Kulu, on the south by Kanawar, and on the east by the Chinese district of Chumurti. It comprises the whole valley of the Spiti river, from its source to the junction of the Para, a length of about 64 miles. Its mean length is not more than 52 miles, and its mean breadth only 36 miles, which gives an area of 1,900 sq. miles. The mean elevation of the inhabited parts is 12,986 feet.<sup>15</sup>

14. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 22.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 24.



7. **Lahul** (or Lho-yul, "the southern district) is bounded on the north by Zanskar and Rukchu, on the west by Kashtwar, on the south by Chamba and Kulu and on the east by Spiti. It comprises the valleys of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers, as well as that of the Chandra-bhaga or united stream as far as Triloknath, below which the people are of Hindu race and religion, with but little admixture of Tibetan blood. With the single exception of the valley of the Indus, Lahul possesses more cultivated land, and a less vigorous climate than any of the other districts of Ladak. There the current and the gooseberry are both found wild, and in the lower parts of the valley towards Triloknath the mountain slopes are covered with fir trees. Like Kanawar, Lahul partakes somewhat of the climate and productions of India as well as of those of Tibet. The people, their language, and their dwellings are mostly Tibetan, but with a strong admixture of Indian origin. Lahul is 68 miles in length by 34 miles in breadth, which gives an area of 2,312 sq. miles. The mean elevation of inhabited parts is 11,063 feet.<sup>16</sup>

#### ROUTES OF DOGRA INVASIONS

In order to be able to appreciate fully the difficulties and hazards which the Dogra troops of Wazir Zorawar Singh had to encounter, it is necessary to conceive a picture of the routes and strange lands which they had to traverse during their Himalayan and trans-Himalayan conquests. During the first year of the occupation of Ladakh by Zorawar Singh, the different roads from Jammu to Leh were constantly traversed by the Dogra troops, who latterly always took the route through Kashtwar and Zanskar, in preference to that of Kashtwar and Suru—which they thought considerably longer.

##### South-Western Road

From Jammu the Zanskar road proceeded direct through Sruinsar, Thalaura and Ram-nagar to Bhadarwah, a distance of seventy three miles. From thence it crosses the Bhadri-Dhar Pass, 10,165 feet, into the Chamba district, and over Saj-Joth., 14,794 feet, into the valley of the Chandarbhaga near Chatargarh, a further distance of 116 miles. From the Chenab, the road crosses to Bara Lacha range by the Umasi-la or Burdar Pass, 18,125 feet, to Padam the chief town<sup>17</sup> of Zanskar, a distance of fifty-six miles. In this rugged district the road is bad and difficult. At first it follows the course of Zanskar river as far as Chand-la, where it enters the mountains. Beyond Pangachi it proceeds

16. A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, p. 24.

17. A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, pp. 150-152.

over another pass, 16,495 feet, and descends rapidly to the river, which it crosses by the Nira bridge. From thence it ascends the lofty mountains that bound Zanskar on the west, and enters the Wanla district by the Sin-ge-la, 16,952 feet, from it follows the Wanla river to Lama-Yurn, from which it follows the Wanla-chu to its junction with the Indus, below the bridge of Khallach, where it crosses the river to its right bank. From this point it ascends the Indus, past the villages of Nurla, Sasspola, Bazgo, and Nyimo, to Pitak, where it leaves the river and turns to the north-east for a few miles to the city of Leh. The whole distance from Jammu to Leh is 375 miles. The lofty passes on this road are seldom open before June, and they are always closed by the end of October.

From Padam there are two other routes to Leh, the direct route through Zanskar and the winter route through Rukshu. The later was taken by Wazir Zorawar Singh, in the winter of 1835, when all the passes on the more direct road had long been closed.

### **The Western Road**

The other route frequented by the Dogra armies was the Western Road, from Kashmir to Leh, which traverses nearly the whole extent of Ladakh from west to east, from the Seo-ji-la (Zoji-la), at the head of the Dras river, to Leh. From Zoji-la it follows the course of the Suru river, up which it proceeds as far as Karguil. From thence it ascends the Purig Valley past the fort and town of Paskyum, as far as Waka, where it leaves the Waka river and crosses the Namyika Pass, 13,000 feet, to the bed of the Kanji river. Thence over the Photo-la, an easy pass, 13,240 feet, to the village of Lama Yuru, and thence to Leh, as in the route described from Jammu to Leh. The whole distance from Kashmir to Leh is 228 miles.

This is one of the most excellent and most easy routes to be found throughout the Jammu-Kashmir mountains. It is passable from March till November, when it is closed by the vast masses of snow that accumulates on the Kashmir side of the Zojila, and which renders the passage very dangerous, both in March and April as well as in November. The greater portion of this road which lies in Ladakh was made by Zorawar Singh after the conquest of the country in 1834. The large bridge over the Indus at Khallach, as well as the smaller bridges on this road over the Wanla, Kanji, Waka, Suru and Dras rivers, were all built by the energetic invaders, who, knowing the value of good communications, have since kept them in excellent repair. But the portion of it in Kashmir is one of the worst marches, of which Izzat-ullah wrote in 1812, "The road is difficult and rocky, so as to be impassable to a mounted

traveller". This, however, is the most frequented of all roads into Ladakh.<sup>18</sup>

### Western Tibet

The road which Zorawar Singh traversed towards the east of Ladakh, into Western Tibetan districts, leads from Leh to unknown countries, inhabited by Mongol tribes, through Rudok, south of Pangkong Lake. Nothing whatsoever is known of it to the eastward of Rudok, except that by it the Mongol tribe of Sokpo invaded Ladakh in 1686 and 1687 ; and again in the beginning of 1841, immediately after Zorawar Singh's death about 3,000 Chang-pas (northern men, or men of Chang-thang, the northern plains) are said to have entered Ladakh for the purpose of assisting the young Gyalpo. They advanced to Leh where they remained for about six weeks ; but on the approach of Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu with troops from Kashmir, they fled hastily.<sup>19</sup>

Moorcroft, who visited the countries of Western Tibet in 1812 and again in 1820, gives a considerable description of these 'unknown' lands, and provides us with the knowledge of geography and political affairs of Western Tibet as these existed some two decades before the Dogra invasion.

Along the eastern frontiers of Ladakh, in an almost semicircular line, is the province of Chan-than (or snow-country,—known to the Bhotias as Hiun-des, and to the Tibetans as Nari).<sup>20</sup>

The more northerly portions form a separate province, called Rodokh, which lies along the northern border of the lake of Pangkak and continues by the valley of Chushul, from which the capital or fort of Rodokh is distant between three and four day's journey. The road passes by a small lake, called Tsurul (bitter), from the bitterness of its waters, and lies over sandy grass plains, which afford pasture to its sheep and goats.

The fort (of Rudok) itself is situated on a hill in the midst of an extensive plain, about twenty miles south-east from the extremity of the Pang-kak lake. The country is thinly inhabited, and the people are chiefly shephards, who subsist by the sale of their wool to the merchants at Le. It has a chief of its own, but he is subject to the authority of the Graphan of Chan-than. From Rodokh a road is said to cross the

18. *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, March, 1825, p. 104.

19. A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, p. 159.

20 *Asiatic Reseaches*, vol, xvii, p. 45 ; JOUR. ASIAT, SOC , vol. 1 , p. I24.

mountains to Khoten, and the journey is one of three or four days only. All attempts, however, to reach Khoten by this route are rightly repressed by the Chinese.<sup>21</sup>

South of the Sinh-kha-bad (the Indus) river the districts of Sumgiel and Tholing are immediately contiguous to Piti in Ladakh, and to the British dependencies of Bisahar and Kanawar. The chief town of the latter is situated on the left or southern bank of the Sutlej, and is a place of considerable note. It is said to contain one hundred and eighty temples, attached to most of which are a number of Gelums. The head Lama resides there during the summer, but in winter lives at Tashigon (Tashigong) near the left bank of the Indus, on the road from Ladakh to Gardokh. Further to the eastward, and along the Sutlej river, is the district of Chaprang.<sup>22</sup>

The larger division of Chanthan called Garo, is in contact with Ladakh, on the line of the Sinh-kha-bab river. The river, at three day's journey from Kuk-jung, makes a short turn to the south, round the La Ganskil mountain, and then resumes its south-easterly direction. The road follows the course of the river and is, in general, tolerably level, proceeding along sandy valleys, thinly coated with coarse pasturage, lying between bare and rugged hills. Within a kos and a half of Gardokh, also called Gartokh, Ghertope, or Garo, the chief station, which is said to be distant six day's journey from the frontier, the Sinh-kha-bab is crossed, and followed along its right bank. The chief halting places on the route are merely shephard's shelters, except in the case of Tashigon, which is a place of some extent. Gardokh itself which Moorcroft visited in 1812, in his journey to the Manasarovera lake<sup>23</sup> is little else than an encampment consisting of a number of small blanket tents, with a few houses of unburnt bricks, of a similar description as the houses of Ladakh, it is, in fact, little more than a trading station, or mart, where in the summer months the natural productions of Tibet and China are exchanged for those of Hindustan and Kashmir. In the winter month it is almost deserted. The sinh-kha-bab rises from the Kangari, or Kantisi, Tisi or Kailas range, a short way to the south-east of Ghertope.

Chan-than is the chief resort of the shawl wool goat, and is also the pasturage of numerous flocks of sheep, whose wool is an article of trade. In the plain adjacent to Ghertope Moorcroft saw at least

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21. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels, Reprint*, Patiala, 1970, pp. 214-15.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels, Reprint*, Patiala, 1970, pp. 215-16.

#### 64 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

40,000<sup>4</sup> heads of cattle goats, sheep, and yaks, principally the two former.....The wool of Chan-than was sold to the Ladakhis alone, by virtue of an ancient agreement. The province also produced gold in considerable quantities, but the search after it was discouraged by local superstition, and by the Chinese authorities.

Chan-than was formerly subject to independent provinces, but their authority gradually merged into the supremacy of the chief pontiff of Lhasa. It is still normally under his government, but in 1772, the Gurkhas having invaded the southern provinces, the Dalai Lama called the Chinese to his succour. The Chinese drove back the Gurkhas but took the opportunity of establishing their own power in Tibet, and two Ambans, sent from Peking, now permanently resident of Lhasa, engross the political administration of the state. From Lhasa two officers, native of the country are sent to Gardokh as Garphans, who are relieved every three years. The subordinate management of the district is intrusted to two officers, commonly called the Deba and Vazir, the former appointed from Lhasa, the latter a native of the place ; with these the chief Lama of each vantage forms a sort of local council, dependent upon the authorities at Gardokh, who, again are obliged to refer for instruction on all matters out of the common course of events to Lhasa.<sup>25</sup>

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24 *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.* pp. 216-17.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *The Dogra Conquest of Ladakh*

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#### **The Ladakhi Kingdom**

From the nature of its physical features Ladakh has been considered since ancient days, a separate political entity but subordinate at times to the Tibetan empire. Its earlier history therefore is that of Tibet in general, as it originally formed one of the provinces of that kingdom, governed as to temporal matters by an independent prince, and in spiritual affairs by the Guru Lama, or Chief pontiff of Lassa.”<sup>1</sup>

Tibet itself had been subject to China, but during the seventh century, various Tibetan tribes coalesced themselves into a single unit and threw off the yoke of Chinese authority and extended their sway over Ladakh and Baltistan. But in A.D. 722, the Chinese, with the help of Kashmiris, drove the Tibetans out of Baltistan where they were then endeavouring to control the passes leading into Turkestan.”<sup>2</sup>

Tibet presumably formed a sort of league with the Arabs against the Chinese expansionism and the Kashmirian danger, and soon the allied armies expelled Kashmiri armies from Gilgit and Baltistan. But in the middle of eighth century the Chinese succeeded in advancing up to Baltistan and in breaking up the Tibeto—Arab coalition. However, afterwards the Chinese suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Arabs and were compelled to withdraw from Gilgit, and now Tibet was left in the field. It soon established its control over Baltistan and penetrated farther into Central Asia as far as Gilgit, Hunza and Swat in the east, and occupied the whole of Kansu and the greater part of Sechwan and northern Yunnan<sup>3</sup>, and even crowned a T'ang prince as emperor of China. In the opening decades of eighth century the Arabs

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1. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels*, 1837, p. 200.

2. *Ind. Hist. Quart. Vol. XV. Supp.* (1939), p. 101.

3. Richardson : *Tibet and its History*, p. 30.

had become a great power in Western Asia, and with their headquarter at Baghdad they were advancing towards Central Asia taking advantage of this situation.

In the last decade of the eighth century, Tibetan power began to decline as a result of a natural decay which has simultaneously overtaken the other two powers, the Arabs and Chinese also, which were contending for supremacy in Central Asia. The Caliph of Baghdad, Harun-al Rashid (785-809 A.D.) entered into a friendly alliance with China in 798. Compelled by the force of disintegration, China and Tibet concluded a peace settlement in 822.<sup>4</sup> Thus ended this long drawn out triangular struggle between the Arabs, Tibet and China.

During all these centuries Ladakh had remained under Tibetan suzerainty, but according to L. Petech "Ladakh did not constitute an integral part of the Tibetan State but must have been considered as a dependency, or even as a kind of colony, since like the whole of Western Tibet it remained outside the territorial organisation of the Tibetan army as described in Padma-Ikai-tanying. Part V, Chapter IV."<sup>5</sup>

It appears that political relationship between Lhasa and Leh during this period was of formal nature, and the Tibetan control of Ladakh was quite nominal as well as short lived. This explains that "When Kyi-de-Nyi-ma-gon, early in the tenth century, founded the Western Tibetan Kingdom and became the ruler of Ladakh also, he did not find any trace of Tibetan rule in Ladakh."<sup>6</sup>

By the end of ninth century Tibet had plunged into a state of anarchy and internecine struggle, and headed fast towards disintegration. Kyi-de-Nyi-ma-gon, a descendant of the old Tibetan ruling family, escaped to Western Tibet where he was given shelter by the king of Purang, a small state between the Mayum Pass and the Kailash Range. With his help he not only conquered the whole of West Tibet, but also asserted his sway over Leh, Zaskar, Spiti and Lahul, Kyi-de-Nyi thus laid the foundations of the first independent Ladakhi dynasty which ruled the country for about six centuries upto the middle of the fifteenth century when its last ruler Lo-Tro-Chok-Den was dethroned by the Kashmiri king in 1470.<sup>7</sup>

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5. *Ind. History Quart.*, Vol. XV, Supp. (1939), p. 102.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

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The kingdom of Kyi-de-Nyi-ma-gon was divided between his three sons after his death. The eldest son Pal-gyi-gon received Ladakh and the Rudok, the second son received Guge and Purang, whereas Zanskar, Spiti and Lahul fall to the share of the third.<sup>8</sup>

King Utpala (C. 1080-1110 A.D.) the seventh descendant of Kyi-de-Nyi invaded and subdued Kulu, advanced even upto Kumaon and annexed some villages of Baltistan.

But when during the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Muslim rule became established in Kashmir, Ladakhi empire suffered a set-back. King Sikandar of Kashmir conquered Baltistan in 1405 and forced conversion on the Buddhist population with violence.

Zainul-Abidin also invaded Ladakh twice and both Ladakh and Guge had to acknowledge Kashmirian supremacy. The Ladakhi king Lo-tro-chok-den (C.1440-1470 A.D.) aligned himself with Zainul-Abidin of Kashmir (1420-1470 A.D.) and succeeded in maintaining the greatness of Ladakh. But after Zainul-Abidin's death, he was deposed, and with his deposition the first Ladakhi dynasty came to an end in 1470 A.D.<sup>9</sup>

The second Ladakhi dynasty was founded by Lha-Chen Bha-Gan (C.1470-1500 A.D.) in 1470 and was known as the Nam-Gyal dynasty. Taking advantage of internal disorders in Kashmir after Zainul-Abidin's death, Lha-Chen re-established Ladakh as an independent principality. But now Ladakh had to bleed under ferocious invasions of the Mongols from Kashgar led by Sultan Abu Sayed Kashgiri and his commander Mirza Haider, who devastated this Buddhist land from 1532 to 1537. The Ladakhis revolted against the outrageous Mongols at the connivance of their king Tra-shi Namgyal. But the revolt proved abortive and the king was executed by the Mongols.<sup>10</sup> He was replaced by his nephew, Tshe-Wang Nam-Gyal, who ruled from about 1533 to 1575 A.D.

Mirza Haider who had won favour of the Mughal Emperors remained de facto ruler of Kashmir for about eleven years. In 1545 he reconquered Ladakh and Balti and annexed these to his Kashmiri possessions. Both these principalities, however, threw off the Kashmiri yoke on Mirza Haider's death in 1551 and remained independent till 1586. During this period Ladakh found opportunity to follow an expansionist course of policy under its able ruler, King Tshe-Wang Nam-gyal, who

8. A. H. Francke : *Antiquities of Western Tibet*, II, p. 94.

9. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XV, Supp.(1939), P. 117.

10. Mirza Haider Dughlat : *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Eng. tr. by E. D. Ross, London, 1845, PP.417-421.



conquered and annexed Baltistan and perhaps Chitral in the West,<sup>11</sup> and extended the boundaries of Ladakh upto Mayum Pass in the East. He can be considered the first great ruler of the second Ladakhi dynasty, who expanded Ladakhi Kingdom beyond its own limits and established its sway over Guge, Lower Ladakh and Baltistan, "Indeed in his period, we reach the terra-firma of Ladakh's chequered history."<sup>12</sup>

But after Tshe-Wang's death in 1575, all was again lost and the distant territories became independent. Even Lower Ladakh and Purig regained their independence. The new king Jam-Wang Nam-Gyal was drawn into conflict with the Balti ruler, Ali Mir Khan<sup>13</sup>, over the Purig affair and was badly defeated and forced to surrender. Ali Mir invaded Ladakh, plundered Monasteries, burnt all the religious books, and threw others into water<sup>14</sup> and annexed some parts of Ladakh.

But Jam Wang's son and successor, Sing-ge Nam-gyal (C. 1600-1645) ; was an ambitious ruler who greatly extended the sway of Ladakh on all sides. In 1630, Singge invaded and conquered Guge, and annexed its dependency of Rudok. He also invaded Purig, but in this endeavour he came into conflict with the Mughal governor of Kashmir who defeated Singge and compelled him to renounce his claims to Purig and to agree to pay a tribute to the Mughals.<sup>15</sup>

Though Singge met discomfiture in the western expedition, he had an appreciable success towards the east where he invaded Tsang, crossed the Mayum Pass and advanced far into the Tibetan territory. But after meeting a reverse near Sakya monastery, he withdrew to the Mayum Pass. But the Ladakhi King's possession on all Tibetan territory west of Mayum Pass was acknowledged. It was in 1645 A.D. On his way back from this successful expedition Singge-Nam-gyal died at Hanle.<sup>16</sup> But before his death he had conquered all the smaller states around Ladakh, extended its boundaries considerably and popularised Buddhism in his dominions.

His son, De-den Nam-Gyal (C. 1645-75 A.D.) invaded Baltistan and annexed Khapalu and Chorbad to his kingdom and assigned these to Muslim chiefs loyal to his cause.<sup>17</sup> But he diplomatically submitted to

11. A.H. Francke : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, p. 105., A. Cunningham, *Ladakh*, pp. 318-19.

12. C.L. Datta : *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973., P. 55.

13. *JASB, New Series, Vol. LX, Pt. I*, (1891), p. 127.

14. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 320.

15. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XV, *Supp.* (1939), pp. 142-145.

16. *Jour. As. Soc. Beng., New Series, LX, PT. I*, (1891) p. 134.

17. A. H. Francke : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 112.

the Mughal Governor of Kashmir and recognised Mughal overlordship. He seems to have remained a faithful feudatory of the Mughals for the rest of his life. When he died in about 1675, the Ladakhi Kingdom had attained its largest extent. It included Ladakh, Nubra, Dras, Purig, the lower Shyok Valley, Guge, Purang, Rudok, Spiti, Upper Kinnaur, Lahul and Zonekar.<sup>18</sup>

The new Ladakhi King Di-gi-Nam-gyal (C. 1675-1700 A.D.) had a powerful rival in the fifth Dalai Lama who had become religious head of Tibet in 1642 with whom he came in conflict over the territories west of Mayum Pass. And the struggle ultimately came in the form of Tibeto-Ladakhi war fought from 1681 to 1684.<sup>19</sup> Which greatly reduced the Ladakhi Kingdom.

The cause of the war seems to be religious persecution of the yellow sect by Ladakhis and the red sect by the Tibetans with whom Lhasa was at war. The Ladakhi king Digi declared himself in favour of the red sect and entered in conflict with the Dalai Lama as a zealous supporter of his sect. The Dalai Lama was assisted by his Mongol suzerain, and his commander Ga-dan, and the latter with the help of Bashahr defeated the Ladakhis in a pitched battle and reached Leh and took possession of the whole country as far as Nyoma, some 25 miles west of Leh and besieged Basgo, which affair was prolonged for over six months. The Ladakhi king Digi Namgyal fled to lower Ladakh and sought the aid of the Mughal governor of Kashmir. Aurangzeb was too pleased to render conditional aid, and about 6,000 Mughal forces, assisted by troops from Lower Ladakh and Baltistan, moved into Ladakh defeated the Tibeto-Mongol troops and pushed them to the traditional Ladakhi, West Tibet border at Tashigong.<sup>20</sup> Both the Mughals and Tibetans agreed to leave Ladakh *inviolate* and withdrew. The Mughals, however, had extracted some concessions from Ladakhi ruler in return for aid. Digi Nam-Gyal had to accept Islam<sup>21</sup> and take the new title Aqubat Khan, which continued to be used by the Ladakhi kings till Dogra conquest of this land. He also undertook to strike coins in the name of the Emperor and to repair the monque constructed in 1667, and to pay a tribute to

18. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XV, *Supp.* (1939), pp. 155-156.

19. L. Petech. "The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Mughal War of 1681-83," *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XXIII (1947), pp. 169-99.

20. L. Petech : "The Tibetan—Ladakhi-Mughal War of 1681-83." *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XXIII (1947), pp. 183-85 ; A. Cunningham . *Ladakh*, p. 327 ; Sufi, *Kashmir*, Vol. I, p. 277.

21. A.H. Francké : *Western Tibet*, p. 109 ; *Moorcroft's Travels*, I, pp. 336-37.

the Mughals. Ladakhis also lost much of its territory. The Raja of Kulu, who had helped the Mughals was given upper Lahul, and Purig and other principalities conquered by the Ladakhis during the reign of De-den were restored to their original rulers.<sup>22</sup>

After a prolonged negotiation peace was concluded between Leh and Lhasa, in 1684, and Western Tibet territory, West of Mayum Pass, conquered by Ladakh in 1640, was given to Tibet. This settlement also regulated Ladakh's commercial and ecclesiastical relation with Lhasa. It was stipulated that the entire wool export and transit trade of Ladakh was a firm monopoly of Kashmir. Further that all the wool of Chang Thang (North-Western Tibet) was to be supplied to Ladakh only. Ladakh and Tibet also agreed to exchange some trade missions on the basis of reciprocity. The Ladakhi kings who recognised the religious and spiritual superiority of the Dalai Lama, were to send some presents to His Holiness any other Lamaist authorities. This custom was called Lapchak or Lopchak—"Yearly salaam."<sup>24</sup>

Thus the Tibet War administered a calamitous blow to Ladakh; and consequently its vast empire, created by the constant endeavours of Singge and De-den, crumbled to fragments. Ladakh was reduced to a petty chiefship with little potential for future expansion or conquest. The succeeding Ladakhi Kings proved weak and dissipated rulers without ambition for conquests or vigorous administration. Soon Ladakh became victim of internal dissensions. Ladakh, however, ... "had no relation with China of a political nature, had no connection with Lhasa save that which arose from community of religion language, manners and close proximity."<sup>25</sup>

During the eighteenth century Ladakhis played a secondary role under the suzerainty of Lhasa, and now and then had affairs with her immediate neighbours, especially Baltistan. Probably during the reign of Delek Nam-Gyal, who ruled from A.D. 1704 to 1705, the district of Spiti was re-annexed to Ladakhi Kingdom, and it was perhaps towards the end of his reign, or more probably of his successor's reign, that Ladakh was invaded and conquered by Murad, the Chief of Balti<sup>26</sup>

22. L. Petech : "The Tibetan-Ladakhi—Mughal War of 1681-83," *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XXIII (1947), p. 193.

23. C. L. Datta : *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973, p. 65.

24. Ramsay : *Western Tibet*, pp. 85-86.

25. Letters of Moorcroft, No. 3, June 11, 1822, *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, 1836, p. 232.

26. Vigne's *Kashmir*, II, p. 253 ; A. Cunningham ; *Ladakh*, pp. 330-31.

who reigned from about A.D. 1720 to 1750. The Ladakhis seem to have retaliated to these Balti forays into their land. Vigne<sup>27</sup> mentions an invasion of Balti by an army of Ladakhis, during the reign of Ali Sher, the father of Ahmad Shah, the last chief of Balti. But the invaders were defeated and obliged to surrender.<sup>28</sup> Again in 1821, a large Balti force entered the Ladakhi territory, plundered the villages and returned with loot.<sup>29</sup> The weak rule of Tse-pal, the Ladakhi ruler, and internal intrigues going on there had encouraged Ahmad Shah who made capital out of Ladakhi difficulties to carry on frequent inroads and plunder in its territories.

Tse-pal Nam-Gyal (1790-1834 and 1840-41) was the last king of this Ladakhi dynasty which was subverted by the Dogras. He had inherited the throne from his brother. Since the days of Aurangzeb down to the days of Muhammad Shah, Ladakh had paid through Kashmir, a small annual tribute to the court of Delhi,<sup>30</sup> and the same had been continued to be paid to the Durrani of Kabul after the cession of Punjab to them by the Mughals in 1752, through the Durrani officers in Kashmir, until that province was invaded and subdued by the Sikhs in 1819 A.D.

#### DOGRA INVASION OF LADAKH

The Dogra expeditions for the conquest of Ladakh started in 1834. The Dogra Raja Gulab Singh had, before embarking on his Himalayan conquests, ascertained British views and extracted in some form Maharaja Ranjit Singh's implied consent. In conquering Ladakh the Maharaja had, in fact "provided a base from which the dominions of Lahore Darbar could be extended beyond the Himalayas."<sup>31</sup>

The conquest of Ladakh was also a necessary corollary to the occupation of Kashmir Valley by Ranjit Singh. As Major Hearsay notes, "In the event of an enemy wishing to conquer Kashmir that place could always be invaded from the Ladak side and the task of invasion would become easier in the winter with the snow frozen and all the rivers and water courses passable over the ice."<sup>32</sup> The Sikh troops would not be able to fight at an advantage there in the winter. As such

27. Vigne's *Kashmir*, II, p. 254.

28. A. Cunningham, *Ladak* p. 331.

29. *Pol. Proc. of For Deptt.* 20 September, 1822, No. 63.

30. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels*, Patiala, 1970, p. 243.

31. S. R. Kohli : *Sunset of Sikh Empire*, p. 19.

32. Hearsay's Note., Vol. XVIII, 1835, *Asiatic Journal*.

it was necessary for Ranjit Singh after the conquest of Kashmir to subdue Ladakh and maintain it as a buffer. For perhaps similar reasons Gulab Singh was personally interested in possessing Ladakh before the Sikh governor of Kashmir could forestall him there. The governors of Kashmir were therefore "too frequently changed and too closely watched by the emissaries of the Jammu brothers, to be able to carry out such a design, even if they had formed it. For Raja Dhyān Singh, who was omnipotent in the Sikh Darbar, was resolved that no one but, his elder brother Raja Gulab Singh should obtain possession of Ladakh and Balti."<sup>33</sup> In Cunningham's opinion, the invasion of these countries was therefore postponed until Gulab Singh had consolidated his power in his newly acquired territory of Kashtwar."<sup>34</sup>

The tribute, however, was demanded from Ladakh as soon as Kashmir Valley was conquered and annexed to the Sikh State in 1819. Ladakh had continued to pay annual tribute to the Durrānis through the governor of Kashmir, since 1752 A.D., which had been held in abeyance due to disturbances attendant on continuous Sikh invasions of the Valley. Ranjit Singh revived that claim and "intimated some purpose of instituting the claim on Ladakh, and demanding the continuation of the tribute from his weaker neighbour."<sup>35</sup>

At that time the British political traveller Moorcroft and his party were residing in Leh which they had arrived in ... .. 1820. Scared by Ranjit Singh's aggressive intentions, the Kahlon (King) consulted Mir Izzat Ullah, one of Moorcroft's companions, as to the policy that should be adopted on such an occurrence, and "showed a disposition to tender a proffer of allegiance to the Government of British India, as the legitimate representative of the dynasty of Timur."<sup>36</sup> Moorcroft remained in Ladakh for the remaining days of 1820 and the whole of 1821,

33. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 332.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Wilson, *Moorcroft's Travels*, Rep. Patiala, 1970, pt. II, pp 234-49.

Tshe-brtan's account of the Dogra Wars also confirms the fact of Ladakhi vassalage to Kashmir which describes the fact in the following words:

"To say 'Salam' to the King of the La-dvags (Ladakh) there came annually from Kashmir (a Kashmiri) called Ma-lig, and together with him about one hundred assistant pony-men. In return to this the king of La-dvags sent with a man from Khalatse, called Drag-chos-don-grub, various products of La-dvags, for instance, a yak, a sheep, a goat, a dog, and also more valuable things."

A. H. Francke : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, *Arch. Surv. of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. L*, 1926, p. 250.

36. *Ibid.* p. 249.

He wrote to a friend, "An outline of the principality of Ladakh, as much details of the interior and exterior relations as may enable our government to appreciate the value of the subjection and the cost of protection have been transmitted to the political department."<sup>37</sup> Moorcroft's journey might therefore had become the thin end of a wedge and the same process of British expansion might have begun in Ladakh as was later on repeated in Sind. "The timid indecision of the Ladakhi ruler delayed the offer of allegiance to the British" until a message had been received from Kashmir, inquiring why the tribute had not been paid as usual and threatening a forcible levy, if it was not speedily despatched."<sup>38</sup> The Kahlon became the more anxious to apply for British protection and Moorcroft readily consented to be the medium of forwarding the tender of allegiance to Bengal, addressing a letter to the Sikh Chief, at the same time, to apprise him of what had occurred.<sup>39</sup> But in the year 1821 the British Government had not yet become apprehensive of the accumulation of wealth and power in hands of Ranjit Singh."<sup>40</sup> So the allegiance of Ladakh was declined<sup>41</sup> and the British Government disowned Moorcroft and tried in every way to quiet the alarm of Ranjit Singh"<sup>42</sup>, who was informed that Moorcroft had "acted without the sanction of the Government."<sup>43</sup> The Bengal Government, in a letter addressed to the Sikh Chief, exhibited their disinclination to have any political connection with Ladakh, and thus in an implied manner they accepted Ladakh within the Sikh sphere of influence. Thus "that state was placed at his (Ranjit Singh's) mercy."<sup>44</sup>

Latter on, when the British Government became apprehensive of the power of Ranjit Singh, they considered its limitation in the direction of Sind as more important than in the direction of Ladakh, so Ladakh could easily be conquered by the Jammu Raja Gulab Singh in 1834."<sup>45</sup>

37. Letters of Moorcroft, No. I, *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, 1836, p. 232.

38. Wilson, *Moorcroft's Travels*, Rep. Patiala, 1970, p. 249.

39. *Ibid.*

40. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 3rd ed., 1951, p. 124.

41. *Political Proceedings*, 27th October, 1821, No. 23.

42. Wilson, *Moorcroft's Travels*, Rep. Patiala, 1970, Pt. II, p. 250.

43. Wilson, *Moorcrofts' Travels*, Rep. Patiala, 1970, Pt. II. p. 250.

44. *Ibid.*

45. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 3rd ed., 1951, p. 124.

Encouraged perhaps by the presence of Moorcroft, the Ladakhi King reacted boldly to the ultimatum of the Sikh Governor of Kashmir for the payment of tribute, and refused to recognize the suzerainty of the Khalsa Maharaja and terminated all tribute payments.<sup>46</sup> The Sikh involvement in hostilities against the Afghans and the cis-Sutlej hill states, enabled, Ladakh to sever all connections with Kashmir for more than a decade and enjoy an autonomous status and the weak and distant state was little molested until the Rajas of Jammu had attained the government of the hill principalities between the Ravi and the Jehlam, and felt their influence with Ranjit Singh secure and commanding, and the Dogra Rajas found themselves strong enough to subjugate it in the name of the Sikh Chief.

By the middle of the thirties of the nineteenth century Raja Gulab Singh Dogra had realised the value of holding Ladakh for himself and so he took adequate steps to conquer it. According to Wade, Gulab Singh did this "In order to strengthen his means of seizing Kashmir itself when the expected opportunity may offer and the Maharaja Ranjit Singh neither knew his design before the place was conquered ... .."<sup>47</sup> Apart from encirclement of Kashmir, Gulab Singh, like great feudatories, desired to extend his principality for which he had received a standing mandate from Ranjit Singh at the time of conferment of the Jagir of Jammu. Further, endeavours for reaching the neighbourhood of Nepal cannot be ruled out. He seems to have initiated the policy in 1834 which culminated surprisingly in his conquest of Western Tibet upto the borders of Nepal in 1841.

Gulab Singh, therefore, forestalled the Sikhs in Ladakh by suddenly moving his armies across its borders in 1834.

A pretext for invasion was soon found in internal dissensions among the ruling family of Ladakh. Raja Giapo-Cho of Timbus wanted to drive out the Raja of Sant and Pushkam from his territories and, therefore, he sent a complaint in this connection to their overlord Tse-Pal, the Gyalpo of Ladakh. The Gyalpo, however, took no immediate action in the matter. Thereupon the Raja of Timbus secretly sought the help of Wazir Zorawar Singh, the Hakim of Kashtwar on behalf of Raja Gulab Singh.<sup>48</sup>

46. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 44.

47. *Asiatic Journal*, 3rd January, 1838, No. 26.

48. Hashmat Ullah Khan, Maulvi : *Tarikh-i-Jammu* (Urdu), p. 345.

Zorawar Singh Dogra was quick in grasping this opportunity of implementing his master's designs on the conquest of Ladakh. He could not march through Kashmir, which then was the territory of the Sikhs, so Gulab Singh sent general Zorawar Singh, with 4 or 5 thousand Dogra army,<sup>49</sup> through Kashtwar from whence the Ladakhi province of Purig, the estate of the 'THI' Sultans, was reached. This attempt at the direct conquest of the kingdom was not without great risks, and of these the Dogra Chief was probably aware. The severe cold of the climate was certain to reduce the usefulness of the Dogra warriors, at least during the winter months; the barrenness of the country prohibited the mobilisation of a large army. Lack of the knowledge of the roads made slow progress advisable.<sup>50</sup> But the Dogra general seems to have anticipated these hardships and had made befitting provision to take them by horns.

He had chosen experienced Dogra soldiers who were far superior to the Ladakhis in armaments as well as Military tactics and discipline. But one of the greatest advantage the Dogras obtained was by surprising the Ladakhi Kingdom at the time of the deepest peace.<sup>51</sup>

This first thrust into the Ladakhi border was made in.....1834. The Chief Dogra officers who led this campaign under the command of Wazir Zorawar Singh Dogra were according to Basti Ram's account,<sup>52</sup> the following :—

1. Mian Rai Singh, 2. Mehta Basti Ram, 3. Mirza Rasul Beg, 4. Rana Jalim Singh, 5. Singhe Mankotia, 6. Mian Tuta, 7. Sirdar Uttam Singh, 8. Wazir Khojah Bhunjah.

#### **Advance on Sunku and Suru—August 1834**

Bkra-Sis-Dban-Phyang of Sa-phud (Sod), was in command of the castle of Dkar-rtse (Kartse) in the Suru Valley. He sent to Leh the report of Dogra invasion.<sup>53</sup> On this report the Ladakhi king issued a call

49. Hashmat Ullah Khan, Maulvi : *Tarikh-i-Jammu* (Urdu); p. 345. But A. H. Francke calculates the number at 10,000 man (see *A. Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 139) which seems to be a miscalculation, as he himself writes earlier (*ibid*; p. 138) "the barrenness of the country prohibited the mobilisation of a large army."

50. A. H. Francke : *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 139.

51. *Ibid.*

52. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, p. 257. To this list Hashmat-Ullah adds three more names, viz., Imam-Malik, Sayyid Madeen Shah and Sardar Sammad Khan (See *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 345).

53. La-Dvags-Rgyal-Rabs, *Arch. Surv-Ind.*, Vol. L. p. 127.



to arms in Ron-Chu-rGud, *Ldum-ra*, *Sbalti-yul*, *La-Dvags*, and *Pu-rig*.<sup>54</sup> The Ladakhi king appointed rDarje-rGyal-rNyam, (Dorje Nam-Gyal), the Minister of Tog as the commander of this force.

The Dogra troops entered the Ladakh territory by the pass at the head of the Suru Valley.<sup>55</sup> Bakra-Sis was the first Ladakhi noble to bear the burnt of the Dogra attack. Like a selfless patriot he sent the intelligence of Dogra invasion to Leh, collected some 200 men at Kartse in Suru Valley, fought the Dogras for two days and was killed along with his son.<sup>56</sup> The Dogras were, however, opposed by the main Boti (Ladakhi) army consisting of 5,000 men under Dorje Nam-Gyal (Rdo-rje-rnam-rgyal, or Mongal of Basti Ram's Account), the young minister of Tog, on the 16th August, 1834,<sup>57</sup> at Sunku. The Ladakhis had taken positions on the top of a hill and they defended it for a whole day but at last they were dislodged by the Dogras with only 6 or 7 killed and 5 or 6 wounded.<sup>58</sup> The Ladakhis lost about 30 men. They were defeated and fled during the night across the Russi Pass and reached Shergol (*Sa-Sgola*).<sup>59</sup> The Dogras stayed there for the night, and on the next morning advanced on Suru and occupied it. There they halted for eight days.<sup>60</sup> In order to assure supply of grain and grass in that barren land; and perhaps to win the goodwill of the conquered people, Wazir Zorawar Singh prohibited his troops from cutting the corn, which was then ripe, and "his politic conduct was rewarded by the immediate submission of the Zamindars, who came over to him in a body, and placed themselves under his protection."<sup>61</sup> The Wazir then built a small fort-'Kila Suru Kursi' of Vigne's map which he occupied for a month.<sup>62</sup> Thus the most important fortress of the district Kartse fell to the Dogra hands, which was once the seat of the powerful Thai or Thi sultans. The Dogras then took the unoccupied fort of Shakhar (*Shag-mkhar*). The

54. *Tse-Brtan's Account*, *Arch.-Surv-Ind.*, Vol. L., p. 250.

55. A. H. Francke : '*The Antiquities of Indian Tibet*', *Arch.-Surv-Ind.* Vol. L. p. 257.

56. *Arch.-Surv-Ind.*, '*La-Dvags Rgyal-Rabs*' p. 127.

57. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 257; A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 333.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Tse-Brtan's Account of the Dogra War*, *Arch. Surv. India*, '*New Imperial Ser.* Vol, L, p. 250.

60. A. Cunningham. *Ladak*, p. 333.

61. Basti Ram's *Account of the Dogra War*, *Ants. of Ind. Tibet*, p. 258.

62. *Ibid.*

Wazir reinstated the Zamindars of Janguri (San-ku-ri) and Shakhar (Shag-mkhar) in their villages and made a summary settlement of the district by imposing a tax of four rupees upon each house.<sup>63</sup> Small Dogra pickets were then stationed at various places to keep the people in control,

**The action at Lang Kartse (Lan-Dkar-Rtse) and Sod.**

The Wazir left 35 men in Suru fort and 10 men on the bridge over the Suru river and advanced on Lang Kartse and Manji, and to the bridge of Paskyum. Lang-Kartse was easily occupied and Dogras threw up trenches there and remained in that position for over a month.

The young minister of Stog had arrived there. Soon minor skirmishes took place without any result. Meanwhile there was a snow-fall and the Ladakhis decided to take advantage of it and went to war with the Dogras.<sup>64</sup> But it was worse for them. The minister of Stog was killed and some 50 or 60 Ladakhis fell on the battlefield. The Ladakhis effected their retreat across the bridge and by a skilful manoeuvre they pulled it down. The Dogras, however, crossed the river next day on inflated skins without any opposition. The Chief of Paskyum fled to the fort of Sod where with the aid of reinforcements, which had been mobilised and despatched by the king of Ladakh, he determined to hold out.<sup>65</sup> The old king of Ladakh had sent his ministers, Ngorub-Standzin and Bankhapa to mobilise all those districts which had not yet sent any warriors and now a force of about 4,000<sup>66</sup> men was expected to arrive at Sod Fort, a little north of Kargil (Dkar-skyil). But the Dogras set siege to the fort before the force reached Sod and raised a battery against it. The firing continued for ten days but because of the stubborn resistance of the Kiladar Salam Khan there was yet no hope of any success for the Dogras, although they had lost 40 men. The Wazir, who was at Pushkam, ordered Basti Ram to make a vigorous assault with 500 men. Basti Rnm attacked to fort at the close of night, and under cover of battery he stormed open the fort by day break. The Chief (Gyalpo) of Pushkam was made prisoner along with a large number of Ladakhis.<sup>67</sup>

63. 'Basti Ram's Account of Dogra War', *Arch. Surv, Ind. Tibet*, p. 258.

64. Tse Bratan's Account of the Dogra War, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, p. 251.

65. Basti Ram's Account of the Dogra War, *Antiquities of Western Tibet*, p. 258.

66. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 141.

67. *Ibid.*

**A Diplomatic Episode**

Probably, the fresh Ladakhi army had also arrived soon after this Dogra success. But the Ladakhi generals seemed to have been overwhelmed by the superior armaments of the Dogras, and hence they dared not attack them. But there was another tangible cause for this Ladakhi inactivity, and rather Zorawar Singh's reluctance to push forward his conquest. At the time when Zorawar Singh Dogra invaded Ladakh and had taken possession of Western provinces of Suru and Dras, and had advanced into the valley of Pashkyum, the eccentric Dr. Henderson chanced to be present at Leh. The ruler of Ladakh tried to make use of him to reassure his people and to outwit the Dogra general. Hoping to make the invading Dogra General Zorawar Singh believe that he was an envoy sent from the East India Company, with proffers of assistance, the Ladakhi king refused to suffer him to quit Ladakh. For three months poor Henderson was detained in duress. During this interval, Zorawar Singh's military operations were suspended, and he apprised Gulab Singh of the supposed envoy's arrival, requesting fresh instructions. Gulab Singh on his part applied to the Maharaja, who, without a moment's delay, addressed the political resident at Ludhiana, to ascertain the meaning of such proceedings. The resident assured the Maharaja that the British Government had nothing to do with Dr. Henderson, and that there was not the slightest idea of interfering with Ranjit's plans of extending his conquests northwards. Zorawar Singh, after this explanation, was desired to proceed with his operations.<sup>68</sup> Incidentally, this Henderson affair shows Ranjit Singh's keen interest in the conquest of Ladakh by the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh, and also belies Wade's assertion that the Maharaja did not like the conquest of Ladakh.<sup>69</sup>

**A Spirited Resistance by Ladakhis**

These political negotiations were prolonged for three months and the winter had set in. The cold began to be felt in the Dogra camp as it was probably the mid November and Wazir Zorawar Singh and his men would have very much liked to make peace and return to Kashtwar for the winter. He levied taxes on the peasants of Paskyum district, and then sent an envoy to open negotiations with the Ladakhis. A

68. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, 1845, pp. 101-102; A Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 10-11.

69. *Pol. Procd*, January, 1838 No. 26,

whole month was then wasted in fruitless negotiations with the Zamindars of the district, who would not agree to the terms of settlement proposed by the Wazir.<sup>70</sup> The Tibetan commanders, however, were anxious to negotiate a peace settlement on terms of the payment of rupees 15,000 demanded by the Wazir. They forwarded the letter to the King of Ladakh (Gyalpo of Ladakh, La-dvags rgyal-po), who had by this time arrived at Mulbe (Mulhbye) with a large army, accompanied by Banka Kahlon (Ban-Kha-bkah-blon) and four chiefs named Gapaju (ga-pa-jo), Dorje Namgyal (Rdo-rje-rnam-rgyal), Chovang Nabdan (Tse-dban-rab-bartan) the Kahlon of Bazgo (Bab-sgo-bkah-blon), and Rahim Khan of Chachot (Chu-sod).<sup>71</sup> The king and his ministers were inclined to accept the terms and even ordered the demanded sum to be despatched out of the royal treasury. But one of the queens 'Zi-Zi' interfered and prohibited the payment of the sum and said, "Minister of Stog is of no use. Therefore Dnos-grub-bstan-hdzin and the minister of Ldum-ra should go and bring Wazir's head or to lose their own."<sup>72</sup>

This stiff attitude of the queen led to renewed and strenuous military activity coupled with treachery. They opened negotiations, sent envoys to the Dogra camp and showed preparedness to agree to honourable terms. The envoys proposed that some confidential agents should be sent back with them to treat with their chiefs. Thereupon, five men, with two respectable Zamindars, named Gola and Nanda, were sent with the envoys. On their arrival in the Ladakhi camp they were treacherously seized and thrown down the bridge of Darkech (probably Darkyed). At the same time Bankha Kahlon (Ban-Kha-Bkah-blon), by a circuitous route, attacked the Dogras in the rear, and made many prisoners, who were thrown bound into the river.<sup>73</sup> On this the Wazir, realized the danger of the situation, retreated to Langkartse with some difficulty and took shelter in the fort of Thai Sultans. There the Dogras remained unmolested for four months<sup>74</sup> of winter.

During this time the Ladakhis increased their army by further mobilisation. In April 1835<sup>75</sup>, when winter was over the Ladakhis about 22,000 men under Banka Kahlon (Ban-kha-bkah-blon) according to

70. *Ibid*, p. 258.

71. *Ibid*, p. 258.

72. "La-dvags-Rgyal-Rabs," *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, p. 128.

73. "Basti Ram's Account of the Dogra War", *Arch. Surv of Ind., New Imperial ser., Vol. L.* p. 249.

74. *Ibid*.

75. *Vigne, Kashmir*, II, p. 253, says the spring of 1835.

Langkartse.<sup>76</sup> They halted for a consultation, which ended in the whole body sitting down to prepare evening meal. The Dogras attacked them with their swords and put the whole Ladakhi force to rout. Banka Kahlon and the other Ladakhi Leaders became alarmed and fled. Some 400 of them perished by the fall of a snow-bed and about 1200 were taken prisoners, along with Moru Todzi (Dnos-grub-bstan-hdzin) the Kahlon of Bazgo (Bab-ago-bkah-blon), and his son Hgyur-med.<sup>77</sup> After this disastrous defeat at Lang Kanchu (Lang-Korchu of Basti Ram, and Lang-Mkhar-rtse of chronicles) the Ladakhi army retreated as far as Mulbe, and the Dogras moved down to Paskyum for the second time. When the Ladakhis heard of this movement, they retired still further towards Leh. Thus both armies were moving in the same direction, the Ladakhi being generally two days in front of the Dogras.<sup>78</sup> Those Purig Chiefs who had been kept as prisoners by Tsepal sometime before, served as guides to the Dogras.

#### **Dogras Occupy Leh.**

From Paskyum the Dogras marched by Shergol (Sar-Sgo-la) to Mulbid (Mul-hbye); where they halted for fifteen days, and then proceeded via Kharbu (Mkhar-bu) to Lama Yuru (Bla-ma-gyu-ru) when they were met by an envoy with a letter from Sultan Akbat Mahmud (Tse-pal) the king of Ladakh, suing for peace. Eight months, he said, had now elapsed in the vain struggle for independence, and that if the Wazir should promise faithfully that he should not be seized he would come himself to treat about the terms of peace. On receiving assurance from the Wazir on acceptance of payment of annual tribute to Gulab Singh, the Gyalpo (rgyal-po, king) moved to Bazgo where the Wazir met him along with Mehta Basti Ram and 100 men. The Gyalpo received the Wazir kindly.<sup>79</sup>

After ten days stay there the Ladakhi king and Wazir Zorawar Singh moved to Leh. The Wazir was accompanied only with 100 men. It appears that peace negotiations had been practically finished at Bazgo,<sup>80</sup> and that Zorawar Singh went to Leh only, as he said, "to see the capital."<sup>81</sup>

76. *Ibid.* The number 22,000 seems to be much exaggerated.

77. *Ibid.*

78. Francke, A.H. : *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 145.

79. A.H. Francke, "Basti Ram's Account of the Dogra War"-*Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Pt. II*, p. 260.

80. A H Francke, *A Hist. of the Western Tibet*, p. 146.

81. A. H. Francke, "Tse-bratan's Account." -*Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Pt. II*, p. 252.

When the Wazir came to Leh he had only a very small detachment of soldiers, about 100, with him as guard. Here an interesting incident occurred. When the Wazir was preparing to offer his usual *Sadka* of Rs. 100 (a bag of money waved around the head of the person to who present it), to Gyalpo's son, named Chang-raftan, then only 17 years of age, the prince, mistaking the action either for an insult or for teachery, draw his sword. His followers did the same, and the Dogras also drew the swords. On this the Gyalpo fell upon his knees, and clasped the Wazir's hands, while the prince and his followers retired into the fort of Leh. Some horsemen carried the intelligence to the Dogra camp at Bazgo, when 5,000 men started at once for Leh, which they reached the next morning.<sup>82</sup>

For four months the Wazir remained at Leh when finally the second part of the peace negotiations took place in the Karzo garden, where Zorawar had his tent. The Wazir's first act was to restore the whole kingdom to Tsepal.<sup>83</sup> The Kingdom, however, was henceforth considered the vassal state of the Dogra Kingdom of Jammu, and the king promised to pay an indemnity of 50,000 rupees, and an annual tribute of 20,000 rupees. Of the first a sum of Rs. 37,000 was paid at once, partly in cash and partly in jewels. The balance the Gyalpo promised to pay in two instalments, the first of Rs. 6,000 at the end of one month, and the second of Rs. 7,000 at the end of four months.<sup>84</sup> The Wazir then fell to Lama, Yuru (Gyum-Drum).

#### Revolts In Ladakh :

This treaty did not, however, end Dogra difficulties with Ladakh. Zorawar Singh spent much of the next five years suppressing revolts in various parts of Ladakh, periodically changing kings in an effort to find a satisfactory puppet ruler. A further complication arose from the fact that a number of Sikh officials were less favourably disposed towards the Dogras than Ranjit Singh.<sup>85</sup>

82. A Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 338-39 ; *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 250.

83. *Arch. Surv. of India, New Imperial Series*, Vol. L., La-dvags-rgyal-rabs, p. 129.

84. A. H. Francke, Basti Ram's Account of the Dogra War, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 260.

85. Fisher, Rose, Hutten back, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 260.

After four months at Leh, the Wazir withdrew with all his forces to Lama Yuru. At this place he heard that the Chief of Sod, whose castle had been bombarded, had rebelled, marched against the Dogra fort at Suru, captured it and put to death all the Dogra garrison of fifty-five men.<sup>86</sup> By forced marches the Wazir reached Sod ; but the enemy having dispersed they halted there for fifteen days. Thence they marched to Suru in two days, a distance of about thirteen miles. There they surprised the Botis (Tibetans) by a night attack. Thirteen of the enemy were taken prisoners and hanged upon trees while by a promise of fifty rupees for every head the Dogras obtained 200 prisoners which were at once beheaded. After this the Zamindars of the district tendered their submission.

Here it was discovered that this rebellion had been excited by Mihan Singh, the Sikh governor of Kashmir, who had sent a servant of his own, named Fateh Singh Jogi, with 50 men to the assistance of Suru and Sod.<sup>87</sup> Mihan Singh's implication in Ladakhi affairs was due, besides to the usual mutual jealousies among the courtiers, to the fact that the supply of shawl wool to Kashmir had diminished by the Dogra incursions.<sup>88</sup> It was now directed from Ladakh to Jammu and the Panjab via Kashtwar.

Ranjit Singh himself had long coveted Ladakh, but he was evidently content to see its conquest accomplished by the Dogras, especially as Raja Dhian Singh presented him with its tribute of 3,000 rupees. He received a deputation in Lahore sent in the name of Ngo-trup-ten-zin (Dngos-grub-bstan dzin), the current puppet ruler of Ladakh, and thus recognised Gulab Singh's conquest.<sup>89</sup> On the part of Gulab Singh, he asserted his independent and direct control of Ladakh by paying tribute directly to Ranjit Singh rather than through the Governor of Kashmir, "presumably because he did not wish to provide the Srinagar authorities any basis for a claim to Ladakh after the expected dismemberment of the Sikh empire."<sup>90</sup>

86. A. H. Francke. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II., p. 260.

87. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*. Vol. II, p. 260-61. A. Cunningham gives the name of Mihan Singh's *Ladak*, p. 340, which is apparently wrong.

88. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground*. p. 47.

89. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback, *Himalayan Battle-ground*, p. 47 ; *Pol. Consult*, March 1, 1838.

90. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 47.

After subduing the chief of Sod and the reduction of Suru in about September 1835, the Wazir left Suru and marched in ten days to Zanskar (Zans-dkar), the Chief of which place together with all the zamindars waited upon him, and agreed to pay a tax of three rupees and half for every house. After all this had been accomplished the Wazir went, apparently to Jammu, to report his successes to his master, Gulab Singh.<sup>91</sup>

But soon after Wazir Zorawar Singh's departure from his newly conquered territory, another revolt in Ladakh was engineered by the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, Mihan Singh. The Gyalpo (King of Ladakh) listened to his advice and revolted in Leh, and closed the road to merchants, confiscated, the property of Moru-Tadzi (Dnos-grab-bstan-hdzin) and the Banka Kahlon. He also imprisoned and tortured Munshi Daya Ram, whom the Wazir had stationed at Leh as his representative.<sup>92</sup> This news distressed the Wazir very much ; and his anxiety was further increased by the difficulty of finding a guide who would conduct him by the direct route to Leh, up which he had determined to march at once. Every one professed entire ignorance of any direct route, until at length a man named Midphi Sata offered his services, to whom the Wazir gave a present of a pair of golden bracelets, worth Rs. 500/-besides two rupees a day, and the promise of the district of Zanskar in perpetuity. With 12 seers of wheaten flour, and a bag of barley upon each horse, the party, under the direction of their guide reached the village of Tsumur <sup>93</sup> or Chumri (or Chimra), on the right bank of the Indus on road leading to Rudok, in 10 days' forced marches, where they most unexpectedly heard that the wife and son of the Gyalpo were then residing.<sup>94</sup>

91. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 148 ; A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 340.

92. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 340 ; A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 261.

93. A. H. Francke names the village Lse-hbre. This position must have been chosen by the Raja's family for the convenience of escape into the Chinese district of Rudok, Cf. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 341n.

94. From 30 to 40 kos a day ; but this is impossible in such a country. The probable length of each day's march cannot be estimated at more than thirty miles, which would give a total distance of 300 miles in 10 days. The exaggeration, however, is natural to men in such circumstances. This march must have been taken place in the end of November, 1835, at a season of the year then the winter's snow had already set in throughout Ladak, and when all the higher passes are finally closed. Their route was therefore most probably up the



## 84 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

The wife and son of the Gyalpo took fright and fled to Leh. As the king had marched by a direct route through Zanskar and Shang, so king Tsepal (the Gyalpo) was taken by surprise. He had not even a small army at his disposal as perhaps he had never expected this miraculous arrival of the Dogra army. He thus found wisdom in hurrying to the bridge at Chuchot<sup>95</sup> (Chushod), to welcome the Wazir. He humbly bowed before Zorawar and expressed his sorrow for what had happened. The heir-apparent of Ladakh, prince Chogsprul who probably was implicated in the rising, fled on Zorawar's arrival through Spiti to Lahul. He probably hoped to gain the help of the British against the Dogras. Chogsprul probably died at Spiti in vain hope of getting British help.<sup>96</sup>

The Wazir, accompanied by the old Gyalpo, Tsepal, proceeded to Leh, where he demanded the balance of the Tribute amounting to Rs. 13,000, besides the additional expenses of the army. The king was not in possession of any cash now. So the Wazir was obliged to take the property of the royal ladies in lieu of the first; and to meet the expenses of the new war the ministers of Tsepal offered all sorts of things such as tea, wool, gold and silver utensils, and other goods, which were accepted by the Wazir, as nothing better could be got out of the country.<sup>97</sup>

The Wazir had lost faith in Tsepales professions of loyalty and contrition. He therefore deposed the old king and installed in his place Moru-pa Tadzi (Dnos-grub-bstan-hdzin),<sup>98</sup> the minister of Leh, while the Gyalpo was allowed the village of Stog in Jagir, together with the taxes of about sixty peasants.<sup>99</sup>

Zanskar river, and over the Lunga Lach and Thung-Lung passes to the Indus below Gya. By this route they would have travelled about 300 miles. I know of no other route that would be passable in November. The direct route to Gya from Zanskar is open but for a few months, and that which lies down the course of the Zanskar river, and over the singge La to Lama Yuru, is closed in October. Besides which, the distance by either of these routes would not have been over 150 miles.

A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, 1853, p. 341.

95. This village is on the left bank of the Indus, between Chumri and Leh.

96. A. H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 149.

97. *Ibid.*, also see *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 262.

98. 'Basti Ram's Account of the Dogra War' *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, p. 252.

99. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 149.

Before exalting Ngorub Standzin<sup>100</sup> on the throne of Leh, the Wazir had offered the crown to a certain Dragchos, the first man of Khalatse who, however, declined the honour. Zorawar was much displeased at this and Dragchos was taken prisoner to Jammu at the next opportunity, and nobody has ever heard of him since.

Zorawar, however, could not confide in the fidelity of an opportunist. He, therefore, built a fort at Leh, and placed 300 soldiers in it under Dalel Singh who was appointed 'thanadar' of the place. After making these arrangements, Wazir Zorawar Singh proceeded to Jammu taking along with him Ngorub Standzin's son and some other respectable men as hostages for the good behaviour of the new King. This arrangement must have been made in the spring of 1836, as soon after the traveller Vigne<sup>101</sup> had visited Leh, where he had found that the new king called "Marut TanZin" was installed, while the old king "was living at Tok, over the river, opposite to Leh."

#### **Another Rebellion and Annexation of Ladakh.**

Gulab Singh and Mian Udham Singh,<sup>102</sup> the eldest son of Gulab Singh, both disapproved Wazir Zorawar Singh's action of making over the country to Morupatodzi, who had no claim to it. The Wazir stressed that Moru belonged to the royal family of Ladakh, but at the same time he agreed to depose him on his return to Leh, which occasion arose within a year of his retreat to Jammu. News was brought that the new king had revolted. He had probably listened to the Sikh Governor of Kashmir and won over influential men of Purig and Kargil to his recalcitrant ways. Men of the Governor of Kashmir seem to have guaranteed the rebels to get them help from Lhasa. Kahlon Rahim Khan also believed the word of the Sikh emissaries and joined the camp of the enemies of the Dogras.<sup>103</sup> After engineering a wide-spread revolt in Ladakh, Purig and Padar, he killed the

100. A. H. Francke, *Hist. of W. Tibet*, p. 150, spells the name as Ngorub standzin, a relation of the old king, whose career he gives as follows: "first, an official of the king, who wrote poetry in honour of his master; next a general of the Ladakhi army, who through his want of initiative and his half heartedness was mainly the cause of the downfall of the empire; then a prisoner of the Dogras and now suddenly the king of Ladakh. He seems to have been one of those who easily impress others, especially the mob, for there is a song still known about his wedding, in which much is made of him."

101. Vigne, *Kashmir, etc. II*, p. 354.

102. Udham on Uttam Singh was Maharaja Gulab Singh's eldest son, a promising youth. He was, however, killed along with Kanwar Nao Nihal Singh by an accidental fall of a gateway of Lahore on 5th November 1840.

103. Hashmatullah Khan, p. 360.

'thanadar' of Balde and his 20 men. The revolt in Purig became serious. The leader of rebels there was one Su-ka-mir of Hem-babs, who admonished the people in Purig to make War'. Excited to rise against the Dogra dominance by Su-ka-mir, the people there murdered Nidhan Singh, Kardar of Kargil and Dras and slaughtered whole of the Dogra garrison.<sup>104</sup> Dogra troops all over the country were beleaguered in their different forts.<sup>105</sup> The people of Padar had also thrown aside the Dogra yoke, occupied Chatargarh and killed or imprisoned 20 men stationed there.

On hearing of these occurrences the Wazir started at once with a body of 3,000<sup>106</sup> infantry, probably in the beginning of the spring of 1839.<sup>107</sup> In about two months he reached Balde or Padar; but owing to the swollen state of the river he was unable to accomplish anything for two months more, when the river became fordable, the Dogras attacked the fort of Chatargarh, which they carried by storm with a loss of 15 men on their side, and of 20 or 30 on that of the enemy. Some 20 or 30 prisoners that were taken, had their ears and noses cut off, which frightened the people so much that they immediately, tendered their submission.<sup>108</sup> The Wazir demolished the old Chatargarh Fort and constructed a new one in its place which he named, Gulabgarh.<sup>109</sup> He placed there a strong garrison, summarily settled affairs there and marched for Zanskar over the hills, probably in October, 1839. Their route lay over the high pass which leads from Chatargarh to Zanskar, nearly 19,000 feet above sea. On the Zanskar side there was a glacier extending down to 14,500 feet. Consequently, on this march 25 men died from severe cold, and 10 more lost their feet and hands in the snow.<sup>110</sup> On reaching Zanskar the Dogras found that the people had fled. The Wazir thought it necessary to stay at Suru for two months, to await pleasanter weather. During this stay in Zanskar everything was arranged satisfactorily. After that, Rai Singh and Mian Tota, with about 1,000 men, advanced towards Leh. When Ngorub standzin (Moru

104. Hashmat Ullah, p. 360-61; 'Tshe-brtan's Account of the Dogra War,' *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, vol. II, p. 252.

105. A Cunningham, *Ladakh*, p. 343.

106. A. H. Francke: *Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 151: but 5,000 according to Hashmatullah, see *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 361.

107. *Ibid.*

108. A. Cunningham, *Ladak.*, p. 344; A. H. Francke; *Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 151.

109. Hashmatullah, p. 361.

110. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 344.

Tadzi) heard that the Wazir was advancing towards Leh, he left all his royal dignity behind and fled to Spiti, although the enemy numbered only 1000. "Whether he actually had a bad conscience, or whether he was only afraid of slander, cannot be decided," opines Francke, "But no favourable interpretation was put upon his flight."<sup>111</sup> Moru Tadzi, the new Gyalpo, who was formerly Kahlon of Banka, fled precipitately from the capital. Being closely pursued, he was nearly overtaken, when by the resistance of some of the more trustworthy of his followers, he was enabled to continue his flight. He was at length captured at the village of Tabo, in Spiti, after a loss of 6 or 7 men on each side ; on which he was taken back to Leh and imprisoned.<sup>112</sup>

As Tse-brtan narrates—the soldiers of Ladakh and Purig being afraid of the Sin-pa (Dogra) soldiers, went before Zorawar and said : "We have all come here to say Salam to you. We want to make a petition.' Such a lie they said."<sup>113</sup> The Wazir, however, was not to be deceived. He detained Suka-mir of Hem-babs in Purig, Yis-nal-mir of Chigtan, and several other people of Purig. After several day's investigation, Su-ka-mir was singled out as the arch-instigator of rebellion in Purig and Ladakh and his right hand was cut off. His tongue also suffered the same fate.

The old Gyalpo Akabut Mahmud, and the new one, Moru Tadsī, were both brought before the Wazir, who deposed the latter, and reinstated the former, upon the old terms of Rs. 23,000 annual tribute, but with a stipulation that the expenses of the troops which occupied the country should also be defrayed by him.

After inspiring awe in the people of Ladakh and Zanskar-Purig the Wazir returned to Jammu. But during the spring of 1840 he was again called to Ladakh with 5,000 men, to nip the revolt in bud which was being engineered by Moru Tadzi, the Kahlon of Banka, and Chang Nabdan, the Kahlon of Bazgo, both of whom had been plotting against the Gyalpo Akabut Mohmud Khan (Tsepal), in association with Ahmad Khan of Balti. He seized both the Kahlons and several others and transported them all to Jammu. He now annexed Ladakh to Jammu dominions, appointed Magna the 'thanadar' or the commander of the district, entrusted the administration of Ladakh to him and pensioned off

111. A. H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 152.

112. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 344.

113. Tse-bratan's Account of the Dogra war'—*Anti. of Ind. Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 252.

the Gyalpo who was suffered to retain the nominal title and his royal palace.

When freed from these arrangements, Wazir Zorawar Singh directed his attention towards the affairs of Kargil and the conquest of Baltistan the Raja of which place had himself provided enough pretext to the Dogra General for interference in Balti affairs by co-operating with the Gyalpo of Ladakh and Moru Tadzi in their intrigues against the Dogras.

The Ladakhi resistance had been broken down before the superior armaments and generalship of the Dogras, who were also adept in the latest techniques of warfare implanted in Ranjit Singh's armies by his European officers. Ladakhi rulers had no standing armies, nor the adequate weaponry. It was perhaps the nature of land and the severe climate which fought the Dogras better than the Ladakhi rabble of soidiers had done. Zorawar's awe-inspiring personality weeded out the undergrowth of rebellion from Ladakhi soil. He also reconciled them to their new subordinate status by making them co-partners in the further Dogra conquests of Baltistan and Tibet, and soon Ladakhi people came to consider their land an integral part of Gulab Singh's dominion.

## *Dogra-Ladakhi Advance on Baltistan*

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### **Campaign Delayed**

After the subjugation of Ladakh, Baltistan became the next target of the Dogra expansionism. Wazir Zorawar Singh Dogra had been adequately provoked by Ahmad Shah, Raja of Skardu who had perhaps felt secure enough in the impassable mountain chains and obyssmal gorges, and the supposed invincible nature of his fort at Skardu, to offend the conquering Dogra.

Baltistan is composed of enormous mountain-chains, or masses of mountains. While 18,000 and 20,000 feet is common height, there are in the north-easterly parts, peaks of 25,000 and 26,000, and one above 28,000 feet. These give rise to the largest known glaciers, out of the Arctic regions. Of the valleys, the most important are the Indus Valley, and the valley of the Shayok, that joins it, and that of Shigar, which combines with the united valley of Skardu.<sup>1</sup>

This mountainous country, in the Indus Valley West of Ladakh, was an ancient Kingdom,<sup>2</sup> comprised of the following tiny principalities under hereditary chieftains owing fealty to the ruler of Skardu to whom they were usually related :

Skardu ; Rondu and Shigar to the North of it ;  
Khapulu, Parkuta, Tolti, Khartaksho to the East and  
North East ; and Astor to the West of it.

While Dogras were consolidating their power in Kashtwar and Ladakh during the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century, these tiny principalities were quarrelling among themselves and now and then fighting with their neighbour, Ladakh. Consequently dissensions and unrest prevailed among the Baltis and the Balti dynasty itself was rent with

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1. Drew : *Jummoo and Kashmir, Territories*, p. 360.

2. Drew : *Northern Frontier of India*, p. 200.

family feud between the ruler Ahmadshah and his eldest son, Mohammad Shah. As stated earlier, the rulers of Baltistan usually quarrelled with the Ladakhis and professed allegiance to the Mughal and Durrani Governors of Kashmir. But soon after the fall of the Durrani and establishment of Sikh supremacy over Kashmir Valley in 1819, Ahmad Shah feigned independence, but at the same time he apprehended Sikh aggression on his territories from Kashmir side. To forestall them on this side he tried an alliance with the company's government to seek their protection. The visit first of Moorcroft, then of Vigne and then of Dr. Falconer to Iskardu, enabled him to postpone the evil day. When William Moorcroft was in Ladakh during the years 1820-22, Raja Ahmad Shah tried to befriend him by sending him presents and furnishing him porters and provisions.<sup>3</sup> Moorcroft, however, did not like to be involved in Balti-Ladakhi hostilities then going on, but he wrote an ambiguous letter to its ruler Ahmad Shah, holding out promises of British support. It fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh and he forwarded it to the British Government without complaint or comment. A duplicate, however, reached Ahmadshah of Iskardu, and that ruler, therefore, continued to expect British help.<sup>4</sup>

When in about 1825 Kirpa Ram, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, invaded the small territory of Khattai on the Balti border and in a second expedition took possession of the territory,<sup>5</sup> the Balti Gyalpo, speeded up in consternation, his efforts to win British protection. He wrote a letter to C. M. Wade which was intercepted on the way by the Sikhs. In 1829, he again wrote to Wade, and since then he kept a clandestine correspondence with the British.

In 1831, Prince Sher Singh, Governor of Kashmir from 1831 to 1833, made a direct attack on Baltistan, though he failed to take the country because of the vigilance of Ahmad Shah who had made adequate arrangements to defend his country against any attack from Kashmir. The Balti King was therefore much afraid of the Sikhs and was quite anxious to place himself under British protection. There was a frequent exchange of letters between him and C. M. Wade. When the French traveller Jacquemont visited Kashmir in 1831, Ahmad Shah took him to be a successor of Moorcroft and sent to him his Wazir Chirag Ali

3. Moorcroft to Swinton, 6-2-1822, *Pol. Consult., Foreign Deptt.* 20-9-1822, No. 68 ; and Moorcroft to Metcalfe, 4-5-1821, *Pot. Consult. Foreign Deptt.*, 20-9-1822, No. 60.

4. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 3rd ed ; 1951, pp. 125-26.

5. *Pol. Consult. Foreign Deptt.*, 5-10-1835, No. 53-A.

with a proposal to place his country at the disposal of Jacquemont,<sup>6</sup> and to assure him that he was the most obedient servant of the British and Baltistan was their (British) country.<sup>7</sup> The Frenchman, however, dismissed him unceremoniously.

Ahmad Shah persisted in his effort to get British protection in some form. When G. T. Vigne visited Baltistan in 1837, he took him to be a British officer sent to his country to ascertain his pretensions of friendship and protection of the British. He, therefore, gave an "exceedingly kind, feathering and hospitable reception" to Vigne,<sup>8</sup> and through him sought political alliance with the British and to interest Wade in his claim over a Jagir in Kashmir belonging to Ahmad Shah's ancestors. But Vigne told him that he was not an employee of the British Company.

The British Government was fully alive to the Balti ruler's desire of submission to them and were in the know of the hectic efforts being made by him in that direction. The British authorities, however, were not willing to be involved in the Balti politics at that time. Their attitude was not very encouraging to Ahmad Shah. The Secretary to the Governor-General wrote to Wade in 1836 :—

"No proper opportunity ought to be omitted of cultivating a friendly understanding with this Chief, but you must be careful, not to use any expression, which could excite in him a hope of our interposing on his behalf with any of his neighbours."<sup>9</sup>

The British Government was wedded to its earlier policy of non-interference in such affairs because, on the one hand they reciprocated Ranjit's policy of non-confrontation where their interests were not directly involved, and on the other they did not yet give much weight to the Dogra policy of expansion towards the impassable Himalayas as they did later on in 1841 and 1842.

But Wade's hints and intercessions on behalf of the Iskardu Prince combined with the visit of Vigne and Folconer to Iskardu with no other merit than that of being Europeans, deterred Gulab Singh from invading that principality for the time being. Most probably Gulab Singh connected Wade's hints with the visit of Vigne and Falconer and as he

6. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 3rd, Ed. 1954, p. 126.

7. Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, II, pp. 147-23.

8. Vigne, *Travels*, II, pp. 236 ff.

9. *Pol. Consult. Foreign Deptt.*, 23-5-1836, No. 112, Governor-General to Wade, 23-5-1836.



did not know that there was any difference of views between the Government of India and its agent, he thought it prudent to postpone his attack for some time and feel his way.<sup>10</sup>

The postponement of this enterprise was due to certain other obvious reasons also. The Sikh deputies in Kashmir had always been jealous of the usurpations of Gulab Singh in Tibet. But Mian Singh, a rude soldier, the governor of the valley during the commotions at Lahore, was alarmed into concession by the powerful and ambitious Rajas of Jammu, and he left Iskardu, and the whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the aggressions of their lieutenants.<sup>11</sup>

Another potent cause was the conclusion of the Tripartite Treaty of 1839 which, Gulab Singh felt, could be invoked against his intended conquests on the Indus. He had therefore, sought clarification in the affair. C. M. Wade represents the Jammu family to have obtained from the British Government an assurance that the limitations put upon Sikh conquests to the west and south by the Tripartite Treaty of 1839 would not be held to apply to the north or Tibetan side, in which direction, it was said, they were free to act as they might please.<sup>12</sup>

Still, at one stage the British Government had intended to intercede in the affair when in November 1839, after the clarification of the doubt, Wazir Zorawar Singh had invaded Baltistan and the Gyalpo had sought British help and written "I long ago put myself under the only asylum, the British protection and considered myself among the dependents."<sup>13</sup> The British Government had contemplated interceding on behalf of the Balti ruler, and remonstrate "in friendly language" with the Lahore Darbar.<sup>14</sup> But later in gave up the idea, and the Governor General instructed Mr. G. R. Clerk, British Agent at Ludhiana, that on the question of Dogra subversion of Baltistan "there can be no reason for interference on the part of this Government."<sup>15</sup> Thus when the British and Sikh authorities had acquiesced in Gulab-Singh's ambitions in Baltistan, it was not difficult for Zorawar Singh to find an excuse for invasion on the Balti which in fact Ahmad Shah himself had provided some years back.

10. N. K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 3rd. Ed., 1951. p. 127.

11. Cunningham, J. D., *Hist. of the Sikhs*, ed. 1916. p. 217.

12. C. M. Wade, *Narrative of services*, p. 33 n.

13. *Political Consult., For. Dept.*; 1-3-1841, No. 127, Encl. No. 1, Clerk to Government, 31 May, 1840.

14. *Political consult. For. Dept.*, 1-3-1841, No. 126, Mackeson to Clerk 18-7-1840.

15. *Ibid.*, No. 129, Governor-General to Clerk, 1-3-1841.

**The Annexation of Purig and Conquest of Baltistan.**

Early in 1835, while Zorawar Singh was halting at Suru on way to his first expedition to Leh, Muhammad Shah the eldest son of Raja Ahmad Shah of Baltistan, came and sought Zorawar's protection. "Ahmad Shah, the reigning Chief of Balti, had differences with his family, and he proposed to pass over his eldest son in favour of a younger one, in fixing the succession."<sup>16</sup> Probably the Chief of Balti had formerly disinherited him in favour of his younger son Muhammad Ali from another wife under her influence.<sup>17</sup> The aggrieved Prince Muhammad Shah fled to the camp of Zorawar Singh in Suru and claimed his protection. This the Wily Wazir readily granted; but not wishing to embroil himself with the Chief of Balti while the campaign of Ladakh was still before him, he pacified him with promises of future assistance. Proper arrangement of his safe stay at Suru were made by the Dogra General, and the Balti Prince remained at Suru for about two years, when he was sent to Leh.<sup>18</sup> It seems that some effort was made to strike a reconciliation between the father and son and the latter had returned to his father, but the reconciliation could not have been very cordial, for early in 1840 the prince again fled to Leh and sought refuge with the Gyalpo Dnorub Standzin, whom he believed to be a puppet of the Dogras. The real authority, however, was not in the hands of the Gyalpo, but in those of his two Ministers, the Kahlon of Banka and the Kahlon of Bazgo, and as they were anxious to have Ahmad Shah on their side during their intended outbreak against the Dogra authority, they suggested to him the propriety of sending a party to seize his son to which no resistance would be offered. Ahmad Shah at once agreed to this proposal, and a small party of 50 men was allowed to carry off the Balti Prince from Leh.

While at Zanskar the Wazir heard of the prince's seizure by a party of Balti troops, he determined at once upon the conquest and annexation of that principality. A letter was, however, first addressed to Ahmad Shah, informing him that his men, who had sought the Maharaja's protection, had been forcibly carried off by a party who had invaded the Ladakh territory, and that, unless the prince was sent back again, the Dogra troops would enter Balti and force his release. To this letter

16. Cunningham, J. D., *Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 218.

17. Hashmat-Ullah: *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 361.

18. *Ibid.*

Ahmad Shah gave no reply,<sup>19</sup> "so he resolved to give Ahmad Shah a lesson concerning the most natural law of succession."<sup>20</sup>

By now he had become master of the situation in Ladakh and Zaskar as rebellions had been suppressed with a strong hand, and the rebel leaders had been weeded out one by one. The inviting situation in Baltistan suggested the Wazir the idea of keeping the Ladakhis, old enemies of Baltis, humoured by offering them an occasion to avenge the wrongs done to them by Baltis in the past. He, therefore, raised a Ladakhi army of about 7 or 8 thousand, including camp-followers of course, and placed them under the command of their old general Kahlon Bankapa. The old Gyalpo was also made to accompany them.<sup>21</sup> They were ordered to enter Baltistan by Hanu and the Chorbat pass. When this army reached Hanu, it was placed under the supreme command of Dogra Officers Ma-di-na-Sa (Madin Shah—Mohiud Din Shah).<sup>22</sup> This portion of the army never came within sight of the enemy, and reached Iskardu in course of time without having fired a bullet.<sup>23</sup>

The Dogra portion of the army was led by the Wazir himself who marched to Gar-Gono by the road leading to Balti through Marol and Kharmang. The Wazir crossed over to the right bank of the Indus near Gar-Gono and reached Pasrikhar in Saut district where he punished the rebels and annexed the whole Purig territory to the Dogra dominion and appointed 'thanadars' at Dras and Suru and stationed Dogra pickets under them.<sup>24</sup> Thus securing his rear the Wazir advanced along the right bank of the Indus in an effort to find a road to get round the many precipices and empty gaps.

As soon as Ahmad Shah heard of the Dogra invasion he took prompt steps to block both the roads of Chor-bat and Marol. He raised a contingent from Kurrus and Khaplu and despatched it under Yostrung-Karim behind Chor-bat, and directed all the contingents of Rondu and Kharmang to march under Bodopa Wazirs Ghulam Hasan and Ghulam Hussain to a place opposite Marol on the Balti boundary in order to intercept Zorawar's advance. According to one estimate

19. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 345.
20. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of W. Tibet*, p. 156.
21. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 364.
22. "Tse-Bratan's Account of the Dogra Wars" - *Arch. Surv. of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. L*, 1926, p. 253., Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 364.
23. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of W. Tibet*, p. 156.
24. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 364.

this armed multitude of the Baltis, comprised of combatants and non-combatants, numbered some twenty thousand.<sup>25</sup> This army set up its camp at a high plateau, three or four miles above Marol village, before Zorawar's arrival at Cheche-Thung, where the Wazir had to leave the right bank and cross over to the left because of the junction of the Suru river with the Indus on the right.

The Baltis had broken down the bridge to delay the advance of the Dogras. Thus the Dogras had to continue their march along the right bank which was strewn with hazardous cliffs and abysses, steadily for 20 days, receiving the submission of the Chiefs of Khatachau and Khapolor (Khapulu), but without finding any place where the army could be crossed.<sup>26</sup> It was probably the month of December 1839.<sup>27</sup> Zorawar's men were faced in that desolation with cold, run-down provisions and over-whelming enemy growing in number and boldness everyday. In desperation Zorawar Singh had to detach Mian Nidhan Singh with a body of 5,000 men by way of Shigar, to look for a road. The Baltis allowed him to advance for about 15 miles when his party was surrounded and attacked by thousands and he himself was cut off with nearly the whole of the detachment.<sup>28</sup> Nidhan Singh himself was cut off and of his force only 400 escaped to the Dogra camp with the tale of their defeat. The situation of the Dogra army on the right bank grew worse and worse, as hardly any provisions could be transported there, and the cold of the winter made itself badly felt in the narrow valleys and gorges.

“At that time the winter set in with a heavy fall of snow. Provisions became extremely scarce. Consequently, the Dogra troops became so much dissipated that their discipline was seriously affected. With an impassable river in the front, and certain starvation both from cold and hunger, whether they retreated or remained in their

25. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 364.

26. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Vol. II, p. 264

27. C. L. Datta, *Ladakh and the Western Himalayan Politics*, p. 122. Hushmatullah says it was in the winter of 1840, Cf. *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 363. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 346, and Francke, *Antiquities*, p. 264, have also 1840. But a news letter, dated May 9, 1840 conveys the news of “the transfer of the Government of Iskardo to Muhammad Shah, the Gyalpo's-exiled son. “Cf. *Press Lists*, Vol. VII, 149/13, of 9. 5. 1840, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock. This supports the date of November/December for the commencement of Zorawar's Balti expedition.

28. A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Pt. II, p. 264.

present position, the majority of troops paid no attention to orders, and of the few who still obeyed, none did so with alacrity. The Dogra army had halted in this position for 15 days, exposed to frost by night and to hunger by day. Many had sought shelter from the snow among the over-hanging rocks, and there they set listless and vacant and utterly indifferent whether they would be cut off by the sword of the enemy, or be frozen to death by cold."<sup>29</sup>

Realising the desperate state of affairs the Wazir himself set out in search of a passage across the river, but after a vain labour of several hours he returned in the evening wearied and despondent. The situation, however, was saved by the energy of Mehta Basti Ram and his party of about 40 men. Basti Ram went along the Indus reconnoitring for several miles, while his party kept up a smart fire upon the Botis (Baltis) on the opposite bank, to distract their attention. Though he did not find any bridge, yet several 'Darads from Da' with him assured him that they would make him a bridge across the river within a few hours at a place where the river was frozen over sufficiently thick to bear a man's weight, save about 20 feet in the middle, where the ice was thin. Then sending for assistance they cut down trees and placed them over the weaker parts of the ice and by 5 O' clock in the morning the ice-bridge<sup>30</sup> over the Indus was completed and the river became fordable.

It is said that Raja Ali Sher Khan of Kartaksha was in secret correspondence with the Wazir from the time the latter had reached Cheche-thung. When he tendered his submission to the Dogras, he secretly helped him. It was with the help of Ali Sher's men from the Marol bank and of the Darads on the Cheche-thung, that the ice-bridge was constructed secretly in a few hours just below the Wanko-la above which Wazir Ghulam Hussan had entrenched his large army and barred the Dogra advance.<sup>31</sup>

29. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 346.

30. The Darad method of building the bridge is the following :—

"They fasten several beams to the bank of the river in such a way that they project into the river. After a short time they are frozen in an incrustation of ice of such solidity that it is possible to walk on them as far as the outer end. Then several more beams are fastened to the first and are made to project into the river. When they are frozen in, another set of beam is brought, and so on, until the other bank is reached." A. H. Francke: *Antiquities of the Indian Tibet*, p. 266.

31. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i Jammu*, pp. 365-66.

As soon as the Wazir received the intelligence of this success he ordered this party of 40 men to cross the Indus, but they have been so benumbed by their night's work, and their previous exposure, that ten of them sank down exhausted and afterwards lost their hands and feet, and 18 others were unable to get through the snow. Basti Ram was then left with only twelve men, which the Botis perceiving they moved to attack him. But the Wazir exhorted his men to his rescue. A number of Dogras advanced gladly to the attack. The Indus was rapidly crossed, and the small party of daring men, after a smart fight were safe. The Botis retreated, leaving 200 men<sup>32</sup> dead on the field, and 100 men wounded. The Dogras lost only 25 killed, and 15 or 16 wounded in the action, but they had about 500 men more or less disabled by the loss of hand or feet during the exposure to the snow of the last few days<sup>33</sup>.

The retreating Botis were pursued, and slaughtered for nine miles, as far as Marwan, where the victorious Dogras pitched their camp. The Wazir halted there for a few days to organise his troops, and to reward those who had distinguished themselves in the last action. To Mehta Basti Ram he gave Rs. 500 and a pair of gold bangles, and to thirty-two others of his party he gave similar presents of less value, to some Rs. 100, to some Rs. 50/-, and to others Rs. 40/- according to their deserts.<sup>34</sup> This decisive battle of Thamo Khon was fought about the first of Phagun, 1896<sup>35</sup> corresponding to about 13th February, 1840.

Hushmat Ullah Khan records the tradition that Raja Sher Ali Khan of Khartaksho<sup>36</sup> was in secret communion with the Wazir. Although he had also contributed his contingent to the Balti army of defence, yet he had assured the Wazir of his full support to his cause and of the treachery of his troops to the Baltis at the critical hour, which they actually committed. It was with the help of the Dards on the one bank of the Indus and that of Raja Sher Ali Khan's men from the other bank that an ice-bridge in Dard manner was so secretly constructed over the partially frozen river that Wazir Ghulam Hassan of Skardu could not learn about the construction of bridge until Basti Ram's bravados

32. "The Number of Baltis killed in this battle of Thamo Khon was about one thousand," according to Hushmat Ullah. Cf. *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 367.

33. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 346-47.

34. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 347.

35. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 367.

36. *Ibid*, pp. 366-69.

had taken him by surprise on the other bank. The Baltis were compelled to abandon their positions in haste and Dogras got control of the Vanko Pass which assured unopposed cross-over of the river by Dogras. In the battle that ensued Wazir Ghulam Hasan was killed along with about a thousand of his followers according to Hushmat Ullah Khan.<sup>37</sup> Wazir Ghulam Hasan and Wazir Sultan Beg of Rondu had escaped from the battle field, but were overtaken and killed before they could reach Marol. It was learnt that Raja Sher Ali's men silently withdrew from the battlefield before the action started. The Wazir thus kept his word with the Dogras, and in recognition of these services, his principality was left unmolested and his position unchanged.

In short, after his success in the battlefield of Thamokhon, Zorawar Singh entered Marol in triumph. But he continued pursuing the fugitives and reached Hamza-Gond where another action was fought. But the Balti resistance was feeble and was easily broken with the help of the people of Kharmang who had now transferred their loyalty to the Dogras.

Wazir Zorawar Singh halted at Kharmang where Raja Ali Sher Khan waited upon him. Through his mediation Ahmed Khan, Raja of Tolti and the Wazir of Parkuta tendered their submission. After four days' march from Kharmang the Wazir reached at Gol where the Ladakhi army which had advanced over Hano-la through Chorbat and Khaplu, also joined him. The united force now moved towards the strong-hold of Skardu. But Raja Ahmad Shah had blocked every road, and his Wazir Yustrang-Karim had stationed his contingents at every pass. Zorawar's success at Thamokhon and Kharmang, however, had caused dissension among the Balti Rajas. Daulat Ali Khan of Khaplu won favour of Zorawar Singh and through his cousin, Haidar Khan, deceived Yostrang-Karim by his feigned loyalty towards Ahmad Shah. Haidar Khan made him divide his army in two columns, one under him with a view to attack the advancing Dogras on two fronts.

Haidar Khan led his column direct in the service of Wazir Zorawar Singh and tendered submission on the part of Daulat Ali Khan and won the Wazir's favour for the imprisoned Raja of Khapulu. He also sent a word to Yostrang-Karim that he and his companions acknowledge Daulat Ali Khan their Raja and the latter had tendered his submission before the Dogra authorities, so they had nothing to do with him. Whole of the Khapulu contingent sent to fight against the Wazir, went

over to Raja Daulat Ali Khan. The people of Khapulu also declared for him. Daulat Ali Khan therefore entered Khapulu in triumph, occupied the fort and submitted before the Dogras. Thereupon Yostrung-Karim left Poen in haste and entrenched himself in Kurrus. There he blocked the advance of the Ladakhi column for a couple of days. But the information of Zorawar's arrival at Parkuta unnerved him and he deserted the fort, crossed the Indus river and—went towards Gol and reached Skardu. Now the Raja of Kurrus, Khurram Khan, also accompanied the Ladakhi column to Gol and tendered his submission to Wazir Zorawar Singh.<sup>38</sup>

In short, whole of the Dogra force reached Skardu without meeting any more opposition. All the petty chiefs, as well as Doghoni-pa Bono, the Wazir of the Raja of Skardu, were on attendance upon Wazir Zorawar Singh who now invested the fort of Khar-Poche, i.e., Skardu in which Raja Ahmad Shah had shut himself up.<sup>39</sup>

Skardu fort was known for its strength on account of its location on a lofty, unapproachable rock. Skardu itself is out in the plain, 7440 feet above the Sea, just at the foot of one of the two isolated rocks ; this, rising to 1000 feet above, overhangs it. Formerly the palace of the Rajas of Skardu stood at the edge of the plateau, where the rock rises from it. The palace was dismantled on the taking of Skardu by Maharaja Gulab Singh's troops. The rock itself was the stronghold ; the fort was built at the south-east end of it, at a part very steep and difficult of access.<sup>40</sup> The fort had only two gates, one on the east side meant for daily traffic, the other on the West from which a covered path descended to the river and the spring for bringing water for the inmates. The usual road on the east was a narrow, zigzag sharp ascent and its whole length was in the range of the tower on the Western Gate.<sup>41</sup> On the higher part of the rock was a smaller fort, in a position very difficult to reach from below.<sup>42</sup>

The Dogras set siege to this fort and blockaded all roads of access. But even after some fifteen days of blockade the besieged showed no weakness. The Dogras, therefore, decided to carry the fort by assault.

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38. Hushmat Ullab, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, pp. 361-62.

41. Hushmat Ullab, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 372.

42. Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, p. 362.



One dark night they stole round from their position in front of the Chief Fort to the south-western corner of the rock, and surprising the guards there posted, climbed the hill, and after a little fighting took the small fort near the summit. In the morning they began firing down, at an immense advantage, on the larger fort, and after two or three hours the Raja and his people took to flight and the place was conquered. All the garrison (except a few who escaped across the river) were either killed or taken ; the Raja himself became a prisoner.<sup>43</sup>

“This deed was boldly done of the Dogras,” writes Drew<sup>44</sup> “It resembled somewhat, on a small scale, the capture of Quebec by the English. The strength of position was such that it should never have been taken except by blockade and starvation.”

By now the Rajas of Kartakhsha, Tolti, Khapulu and Kurrus had tendered their submission before the Wazir and with the victory at Thamokhon and the occupation of Skardu the whole of Baltistan had been practically conquered by Wazir Zorawar Singh. The Baltis were demoralised so that Haidar Khan, Raja of Shigar and the chiefs of Chorbat willingly acknowledged Dogra overlordship. Only Raja Ali Khan of Rondu and Jabbarkhan, Raja of Astor failed to present themselves. It took the Wazir a little more to settle affairs at Skardu before he could direct his attention towards the suppression of these chiefs. He put in confinement Wazir Hussain of Gol, deposed Raja Ahmad Shah of Skardu and installed his son Muhammad Shah as the king of Baltistan<sup>45</sup> on terms of an annual tribute of Rs. 7,000, in the beginning of May, 1840.<sup>46</sup>

The fort and palace of Ahmad Shah were completely razed to the ground. All his property in gold, jewellery and cloth was taken away as war indemnity, valued at about 2 lakhs of rupees.<sup>47</sup> A large quantity of provisions, and many weapons fell into the hands of the conquerors.

43. *Ibid.* Hashmat Ullah, however, writes that Wazir Zorawar Singh made use of Raja Ali Sher Khan and Sayyid Madin Shah in persuading Raja Ahmad Shah to tender his submission to the Wazir personally on assurance of safe conduct. But when Ahmad Shah came in the presence of the Wazir, he was at once imprisoned, and the fort occupied without a shot. Cf., *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 372.

44. Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, p. 362.

45. *Akhbar-i-Ludhiana*. 2 May, 1840 ; *Aina-i-Sikandar*, Delhi, May 25, 1840—National Arch. of India, New Delhi.

46. “The transfer of the government of Iskardo to Muhammad Shah, the Gyalpo's exiled son” was reported by G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock on May 9, 1840—See *Press Lists*, 149/13.

47. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 373.

According to their custom the Dogras built a new fort, "less dependent for its security on advantages of position."<sup>48</sup>

Kahlon Rahim Khan of Chigtan, who had excited revolt in Purig, now met a pathetic end. He had escaped to Skardu and then to Rondu. He was now preparing to flee to Gilgit when he was rounded up and led in the presence of the infuriated Wazir who made him a special target of his wrath, got him mutilated mercilessly in the presence of a crowd of Baltis and their chiefs, and left him in the field neglected and bleeding. In pain and suffering he died crying after two days. Another chief, Hussain of Pashkyum, had received a similar punishment, but survived the operation and the boiling oil application. Wazir Zorawar Singh committed this act perhaps to avenge the murder of Dogra garrisons slaughtered by Ladakhis in Purig and Zanskar, as also "to warn the Baltis against future revolutions" and give an object lesson at Skardo, showing them what their punishment would be in such a case.<sup>49</sup>

Ahmad Shah was shortly afterwards deposed, and his eldest son Muhammad Shah, was installed in his room, on the promised payment of an annual tribute of Rs. 7000. 'But the astute commander, who had profited by his experience in Ladakh, would not leave this new conquest to the doubtful faith of a son of Ahmad Shah. A small garrison of trustworthy soldiers was placed in the new fort on the bank of the Indus, to confirm the faithfulness of the new king, and Ahmad Shah and his favourite son were carried off as prisoners to Ladakh.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile the Wazir had sent about 1000 Dogras in the command of Mirza Rasul Beg and Muhammad Khan, and another Balti army under Dogra officers and chiefs of Kharmang, for ravaging the Rondu territory.

As soon as these columns reached Mahndi or Rondu Fort, Raja Ali Khan, the Chief of that place left his fort and territory and fled, and the fort was taken without any opposition. Afterwards, Rondu territory was re-affirmed on Raja Ali Khan on payment of an indemnity worth Rs. 15,000.<sup>51</sup>

After the occupation of Rondu, the Wazir sent a mixed column of 500 Dogras and some natives under the command of Madin Shah to conquer Astor. At the very approach of this column the Raja of Astor, Jabbar Khan, withdrew inside the fort. The siege continued for twenty days, at the end of which period the Raja was compelled due to shortage of water, to surrender. Madin Shah occupied Astor, and led Jabbar to

48. Drew, *Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, p. 363.

49. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 158.

50. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Vol, II*, p. 265.

51. Hushmat Ullah, *Tarikh-i-Jammy*, p 373.

the presence of the Wazir who kept him a close prisoner near him. But as the Sikh Governor of Kashmir proffered a prior claim on Astor, Jabbar Khan was released and allowed to possess Astor, and the Wazir had to admit a political defeat.

Wazir Zorawar Singh had attained the occupation and submission of all the valleys and heights of Baltistan by the summer of 1840. He had secured Skardo, assured its occupation by raising a new fort and garrisoning it with a Dogra unit, At Khardrung also he founded a strong fort, a part of which he completed during his stay there. He appointed Bhagwan Singh 'thanadar' of the place at the head of a Dogra picket of 100 soldiers. Bhupat and Mukhtar Munshi were appointed to assist him.

After making satisfactory arrangements for the perpetual occupation of Baltistan, Wazir Zorawar Singh broke up his camp and resumed his march towards Ladakh. During his stay at Skardu he had made up his mind to conquer Western Tibet and for that purpose he had raised a Balti Army which accompanied him to Ladakh. All the Balti Chiefs were also in attendance. Raja Sher Ali Khan joined him with contingents of Kharmang and Tolti. Daulat Ali Khan, Raja of Khapulu offered to accompany the Wazir in person on the expedition. While at Khapulu the dreaded epidemic of small pox broke out in the camp, which had a heavy toll of life, particularly of the Ladakhi soldiers. Among the chiefs, Bankhapa was the first victim of the disease. The old Gyalpo Tanduff Namgyal, already broken in health and spirits on account of adversity that had befallen him and the hard journey he had to undertake, also died of the disease. His dead body was carried to Leh and his last rites were performed at his palace in Stog with all the royal honours.

The Wazir reached Leh, probably towards the end of June 1840 through Khapulu, Chorbat and Nubra. Immediately on his arrival there he sent for the surviving successor of Tandof-Namgyal, a boy of about 10 years named Jigsmad Namgyal, seated him on his grandfather's throne and recognised him as the nominal ruler of Ladakh, as Vassal of the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh. Thus was completed the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan by Wazir Zorawar Singh through a process of conquest and reconquest over a period of about 6 years, during which a territory larger in extent than the Kashmir Valley was added to the Dogra dominion. If the jealousy of the Sikh Governor of Kashmir had not stood in his way, he could have pushed his conquests far into the Gilgit territory. But barred in that direction his martial genius led him to undertake the conquest of Lhasa territory which will be described in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *In the Land of Manasarovara and Mt. Kailash (Tibet)*

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With the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan the Dogra principality of Jammu became conterminous with the Central Asian and Chinese Empires. It uncovered new political horizons to the Sikh State of Lahore which was probing around for further expansion through Gulab Singh's efforts. As soon as affairs in these newly conquered regions became finally settled, and the Baltis and Ladakhis apparently seemed reconciled to the Dogra rule, Wazir Zorawar Singh Dogra commenced interfering in the affairs of the territories to the North and East of Ladakh. It looks as if the conquering whim of Wazir Zorawar Singh and the Political sagacity of Raja Gulab Singh had a special drive for the conquests of these adjoining territories.

After consolidating his hold on Ladakh and Balti, Gulab Singh planned to extend his dominion to Yarkand and Kashgar, the Chinese countries which verged on the northern frontiers of Ladakh. Some internal upheaval in these territories seems to have encouraged the Dogra Chief to make designs for the reduction of Yarkand to the State of a tributary province of the Sikh Government<sup>1</sup>. In pursuance of this policy Wazir Zorawar Singh called upon the Chinese Government of Yarkand to acknowledge the supermacy of the Sikh Government.<sup>2</sup>

"A seizure of Punjab opium by the authorities of that country"<sup>3</sup> was probably a valid cause which prompted Gulab Singh to form designs on that country. The Chinese were fighting the Opium War (1839-1842) with the British, and the Governor of Yarkand had seized and destroyed the stock of opium of the Punjab traders valued at about 8 lakhs of rupees. The offended Raja was keen to seize the opportunity of attacking Yarkand. Thus all through the first half of 1841, there was every likelihood that the Dogra armies would move into Yarkand. The British authorities also apprehended a Dogra attack on these territories, and though they gave out that the British

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1. ORPS, VIII. 40/83 of 14.1.1841, Mackeson W. H. Macnaughten.

2. Sec. Consult. Foreign Deptt., No. 91 of 25.1.1841.

3. ORPS, VII. 128/17 of 25.1.1841, Maddock to Clerk.

Government could not interfere in the matter of the seizure of Punjab Opium,<sup>4</sup> yet they anticipated "difficulties in which the British Government would be involved with the Chinese were these designs carried out."<sup>5</sup> The Opium War was drawing to a close and there were hopeful prospects of an amicable settlement of the dispute. Any Dogra 'forward' move on Yarkand could hinder the negotiations which were afoot then. The British Agent therefore wished to avoid creeping up of such an embarrassing situation. Hence he suggested the Sikh Maharaja Sher Singh "to require Raja Gulab Singh to desist from his designs on Yarkand."<sup>6</sup> The British diplomats were sure that the Dogra troops in Ladakh were capable of wresting Yarkand from China,<sup>7</sup> although the British Agent at Peshawar held a different view, that the Dogra troops, though capable of conquering Gilgit and adjacent areas down the Indus, were incapable of conquering Yarkand.<sup>8</sup>

However, while the British Government was left guessing at the intentions of Gulab Singh, and their Agent G. R. Clerk was conveying his apprehensions of a Dogra attack on Yarkand to the Secretary to the Government of India, the Dogra armies had not only advanced into the Tibetan province of Ngari, but had also occupied Rudok, Tashigong and same other important military outposts of Western Tibet. This change in the designs of Dogra Chiefs was due to certain considerations.

#### **Dogra Ambitions and Sikh Interests:**

The countries of Yarkand and Kashgar could not be expected to hold Dogra attentions for long, as these held out only meagre prospects of Central Asian trade in return for hazardous Trans-Himalayan expeditions across some of the world's highest passes. Apart from the trade benefits, the territories north of Ladakh served no other interest. Hence Dogra zeal for the occupation of those legendry regions of Yarkand and Khotan melted away in a short time and all their efforts were concentrated on the Tibetan territories to the south-east of Ladakh.

The plan of Dogra move towards these quarters dates back to the days of Ranjit Singh. The British advance to the cis-Sutlej territories

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4. *Ibid.*

5. *ORPS, VII.* 151/2 of 2-7-1841, Clerk to Maddock.

6. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 90 of 25-1-1841.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 56 of 22-2-1841, Mackeson to McNaughten, 14 January, 1841.

upto the waters of the Sutlej in 1809, and the establishment of their protectorate on the Amirs of Sind in the guise of commercial treaties in 1831, had isolated Lahore Kingdom and cut it off from the rest of India. The Treaty of Sagauli, of March 1816, had already placed a British wedge between the Hindu power of Nepal and Lahore Kingdom by the occupation of Kumaon-Garhwal and Simla Hill States by the British Indian Government in anticipation of any future alignment between these two states. After the Sind affair Ranjit's bitter realisation of isolation amounted, and his Dogra chiefs would have advocated a severance of friendly relations with the British and pursuance of an independent policy in dealing with the neighbouring states in total disregard of British interests, had Ranjit's failing health and mental powers as well as British intrigues with the courtiers of Lahore Darbar not prevented any such move. Ranjit himself had at one time sought to rectify his relations with Kabul by offering to give Peshawar in Jagir to Dost Muhammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, with a view to win over the only remaining neighbour with whom he could form an anti-British alliance and through it to hope to find an outlet to form alliances with the Central and Western Asian powers. But this political move fell through because the Amir refused to accept the offer and come to terms with the Sikh ruler. The unsettled internal political situation in Afghanistan was mostly responsible for the failure of such an alliance. Had this alliance matured both the neighbouring powers would have been immensely benefitted vis-a-vis British designs on both these kingdoms. The greatest protagonist of such a Sikh-Afghan entente was Gulab Singh (and to a lesser degree his brother Dhian Singh Dogra, the Prime Minister of the Sikh Kingdom) and on account of his pro-Afghan attitude and affiliations with the Barakzai brothers he could make it a superb success only if he had been trusted by the Sikhs and given a free hand in carrying out the plan. But Ranjit's unjustifiable fear of offending the British by such a move and his policy of appeasement towards 'the Angrez-Bahadur', stood in the way of such a natural alliance between the common enemies of British power in India.

While Sikhs failed to draw any benefit by such a move they betrayed their proclivity to come to terms with the Afghans at some sacrifice in the future and put the British Governor General on guard. Consequently, to provide against any such Sikh-Afghan alliance in the future and the probability of augmentation of such an alliance by Russian and Iranian sympathy, the British authorities compelled Ranjit to sign the Tripartite Treaty in 1838 providing to place their stoog, Shah Shuja on the throne

of Kabul so as to be able to take Kabul under their protection by instituting a sort of the notorious subsidiary alliance. That Tripartite Treaty was signed by the Sikhs in spite of their unwillingness was later on clearly revealed by their reluctance to carry it out. Gulab Singh's disapproval of this whole affair was marked by his manoeuvres at Peshawar to delay Sikh cooperation to British march on Jalalabad and Kabul, leading to the Kabul disaster of January 1842. But the accession of the Anglophil Maharaja, Sher Singh, in January 1841, and his pro-British policy improved matters in favour of forces at Peshawar inspite of Gulab Singh's pro-Barakzai diplomacy. Moreover, Zorawar's disaster in Tibet also changed the whole Dogra politics later on, as will be shown in the following pages.

Breaking through this isolation and encirclement of the Lahore Kingdom by the English, had become a grave concern for Ranjit Singh in his last days, and for his immediate successors in particular. As early as March 1836, when "Zorawar Singh of Tibet presented homage to Maharaja Ranjit Singh at the town of Jandiala Sher Singh and proposed that "if he be pleased to give an order for the conquest of the country of China (i.e. Tibet) he was ready to kindle the fire of fighting and dispute with the king of China"<sup>6</sup> the Maharaja only pointed out the strength of Chinese army and the improbability of keeping possession of that country. To this scepticism, the buoyant Zorawar replied: "By the grace of ever triumphant glory of the Maharaja he would take possession of it"<sup>7</sup>. Ranjit's silence only showed his eagerness for the proposed conquests, but the bewildered general could not allay his fears. Ranjit's fear-consciousness had marred his soldierly qualities in his last years and his dealings with the British and his aspirations for new conquests were marked by undue cautions which only postponed to a later date the occurrence of events which were imminent and which would have been better handled if these had taken place in his life time when his personal influence was supreme and all the forces of the state and its courtiers and administrators loyally concentrated on the well being of the Khalsa Kingdom. This, however, was not to be. Only after his death, when the noose of British encirclement of the Punjab became painfully tight, the authorities of Lahore Kingdom badly needed some relief in some direction for a fresh draught of breath. A comparatively easy loop existed towards the west, in the frontiers of Kabul Kingdom which was rent by unceasing internal dissensions. But the

6. Sohan Lal : *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar III*, p. 282. (Eng. tr. by V. S. Suri).

7. *Ibid.*

British had already anticipated the Sikhs in that direction and forestalled them by moving their armies in that direction, as they had done earlier in Sind in the days of Ranjit Singh himself.

Consequently, the only field left for the further expansion of Lahore Kingdom and for breaking through isolation, was towards the North and East of Ladakh. It was not for the love of conquests cherished by a Dogra General that Dogra Armies attacked Western Tibet. The mercenary motive of possessing benefits of a lucrative shawl wool trade could also not be an incentive strong enough to drag the sagacious Dogra Chief into hazards and risks which loomed large on any military movement on Tibetan territories. It was in reality the result of a grim struggle for existence on the part of the Lahore Kingdom revealed in the frantic military actions of its Dogra vassals. The rulers of Lahore had to choose between finding out an ally at any cost or to bow before the British Supremacy. Like every self-respecting people they chose the former alternative. The only course left was to extend the hand of friendship towards Nepal by conquering the intervening territories of Western Tibet over which the Dogras could assert claim as being part of once extensive Ladakhi Kingdom. The Sikhs no doubt tried to march with the Nepalese behind the Himalayas.<sup>8</sup>

More important cause than this was perhaps the Dogra diplomacy which has inevitably to be taken into account in any study of Lahore politics. It was the studied policy of Raja Gulab Singh and Raja Kalan, Raja Dhian Singh Dogra as Vassals and Prime Minister of Lahore State respectively, to advocate and see a strong Sikh Government at Lahore pursuing its own foreign policy and free from external interference. They were particularly antagonistic to the overbearing British manner of dealing with the Sikh rulers, and did not see eye to eye with their over-lord Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who followed a policy of "yielding, yielding and yielding" before the British pressure. The Dogra courtiers did not like this attitude of Ranjit Singh. When on the question of Shikarpur the British "would not listen to reason, nor did an appeal to the provisions of the thirty years old treaty of friendship have any effect on them"—Raja Dhian Singh, Ranjit's Prime Minister, was very angry and wished him to fight the English in defence of his rights"<sup>9</sup>, which he however, would not do under the false pretence that the British appeared to be provoking him, when in fact he was mortally afraid of the British power. "The dread in which he (Ranjit Singh) stands of our power,"

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8. S. C. Bajpai : *The Northern Frontier of India*, Bombay 1970, p. 42.

9. Ganda Singh : *Anglo-Sikh wars*, p. 35.



wrote secretary to the Government of India in 1836, "may be accepted as a sure pledge that he will never suffer himself to oppose the views and wishes of the Government."<sup>10</sup> Under Ranjit's successors the power of the king deteriorated and the external independence of Lahore Kingdom became only a literary fancy. The intrigues of the court factions further weakened the State and lowered its prestige contrary to the wishes of the Dogra Rajas. "The conflict of parties in the Punjab," wrote Ellenborough, "will render it more dependent every year."<sup>11</sup> Ultimately things came to such a pass that the contending candidates to Sikh throne negotiated to sell away sovereignty to the British for their help in capturing the throne. The seasoned Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lahore, Dhian Singh Dogra, however, kept up the prestige of the Sikh throne till he lived, and counteracted all British plans on the Punjab. Like all far-sighted diplomats of the Punjab, Raja Gulab Singh and his brother realised that the real danger to Punjab lay in the south of it in the British intrigues which were incessant with Lahore Courtiers and the neighbouring powers. Since the closing years of Ranjit Singh's reign, Lahore State had become a cock-pit of the British and Dogra diplomacies. The Dogra Rajas had thus become natural enemies of the British interests in the Sikh State whom the latter used to treat as subordinate ally.

The hatred of the Dogras towards the British was well known. The late Raja Dhian Singh "Ranjeet's Prime Minister and chief conductor of all the negotiations with the British Government,"<sup>12</sup> had no particular liking for the British, though he knew their power and feared it.<sup>13</sup>

W. L. M'Gregor has written that "The late Raja Dhian Singh has often remarked to ourselves that he was disposed to like the British, but he could not comprehend them, and was annoyed at their not treating him with the respect which every gentleman expects from another—adding 'I am as good as they, a Rajput and a soldier.' We fear, the reasons assigned by the Rajah have too much foundation in truth."<sup>14</sup>

For British authorities Dhian Singh was "most dangerous"<sup>15</sup>, so far as "Nao Nihal Singh and the powerful Wazir Dhian Singh combined

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10. *Ibid.*

11. Ellenborough to Duke of Wellington, Private-4 October, 1842-PRO, 30/12 (28/11) fol. 478.

12. Steinbach Lt. Col.: *The Punjab*, p. 57.

13. M'Gregor, W. L.: *The Hist. of the Punjab*, Vol. I, p. 286.

14. M'Gregor, W. L.: *The Hist. of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 286.

15. Auckland to Hobhouse-Private Calcutta, 22 December 1840, Fol. 431 b.

to develop a strong Anti-English feeling at Lahore."<sup>16</sup> M'Gregor further observes : "At a dinner party given by the political agent to the late Sir Henry Fane and his staff at Lahore in 1837, we happened to be sitting next to Sochet Singh, who was invited as a spectator. He was much delighted at the sight of the guests, and seeing them addressing each other, he thought it due politeness for himself to speak to some of the general staff, expecting a civil answer at the least. But to the Rajah's amazement, his question though put in good Oordoo, only elicited a stare. He made several ineffectual efforts to enter into friendly conversation, when his temper at last became ruffled, and he appealed to us if his language were not intelligible Hindustanee? We assented. "How then is it," he indignantly enquired, "that General L. Colonel D. and others do not reply to me?" We pleaded their ignorance of the language, but the Rajah shook his head and insisted that it was pride on their part and that they appeared to despise him." Dhian's dislike of the British was not simply a reciprocal affair but was based upon a sagacious observation of British moves towards the Trans-Sutlej Punjab. He anticipated British aggressive designs on the Kingdom of the Khalsa. On several occasions Raja Dhian Singh expressed his apprehensions of an English invasion, as also did Maharaja Sher Singh.<sup>17</sup> On such considerations Dhian Singh was even adverse to a meeting between his sovereign and the British Governor General.<sup>18</sup> The fact of British interference in the Lahore affairs was a real one, and Lawrence admits that Sher Singh was desirous of throwing himself unreservedly on British protection, as doubtless he might have been, had he thought himself secure from assassination, and that Lord Ellenborough would have kept him seated on the throne of Lahore at all hazards.<sup>19</sup> But the situation was soon improved by Dhian Singh in favour of Sher Singh so that Auckland had to confess that Dhian Singh and his brothers will resume their position and establish a new administration and avert the danger of foreign interference.<sup>20</sup> At the same time the English were so much conscious of Dhian Singh's aversion towards them that Lord Ellenborough even felt that whenever Dhian Singh feels himself strong enough he will refuse permission for the passage of these regiments and envoys (meant for

16. S. S. Bal : *Anglo-Sikh relations* p. 58.

17. Mr. Clerk to Government, 2nd January, 1842, see *Cunningham's Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 228.

18. *Calcutta Review*, No. 11, p. 493.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Auckland to Clerk-Private-15 February, 1841, Fol. 452-56:

march on Kabul!),” or, what I most fear, he will attack and destroy some one of them on its march.”<sup>21</sup> Mr. Clerk subsequently reported that it was understood that by the advice of Dhian Singh, who was averse to British interference, the Maharaja intends to assure Clerk that perfect order was restored in the army. Such was the mutual distrust of the parties.

Raja Gulab Singh was even greater hater of the British power in India. But his attitude towards them was a rational one—“the Raja of Jammu, always so reasonably averse to a close connection with the British.”<sup>22</sup> In this reference J. D. Cunningham makes the following meaningful observation on Anglo-Dogra relations.”

“Neither the minister (Raja Dhian Singh) nor his brother had ever been thought well pleased with English interference in the affairs of the Punjab ; they were at the time in suspicious communication with Nepal ; and they were held to be bound to Sultan Muhammad Khan, whose real or presumed intrigues with the enemies of Shah Shuja had occasioned his removal to Lahore a year previously.”<sup>23</sup>

The British were also in constant dread of the growing power and influence of Raja Gulab Singh Dogra. In great consternation they always tried to forestall him in his ambition, and opposed any aggrandisement in his power and new additions to his charges. Their hostility towards the Dogra group became vocally violent when an engagement was given by Maharaja Sher Singh “to Jammu Rajas confirming them in the possession of the offices, Jagirs and military commands they at present hold,” and “conferring the Wazirship in perpetuity on them.”<sup>24</sup> They looked upon this document as a virtual abdication of all power by Maharaja Sher Singh, and Mackeson thinks it is time the British Government interfered in the affairs of the Punjab.<sup>25</sup> The English had looked for the success of Maharaja Sher Singh with the help of their arms and when, on the advice of the Dogras, Sher Singh declined the proffered assistance of the British Government to restore order, they became frustrated and even talked of “the juncture at which the inter-

21. Lord Ellenborough to the Duke of Wellington, October 26, 1841.

22. *Cunningham's Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 256.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 221. For this presumed understanding between the Jammu Rajas and the Barakzais of Peshawar, Mr. Clerk's letter of 8th October, 1840, may be referred to among others.

24. *ORPS*, VIII, 40/101-2 of 23-4-1841, Mackeson to Clerk ; and 40/103, of 23-4-1841, Mackeson to Clerk.

25. *ORPS*, VIII, 40/103 of 23-4-1841, Mackeson to Clerk.

ference of the British Government should be exercised” and also realised the necessity of taking some measures to check usurpations of Raja Gulab Singh.<sup>26</sup>

Even in the event of the conquest of Skardu by the Rajas of Jammu and their General Wazir Zorawar Singh, Mackeson pleaded “that the Government might reasonably interfere on behalf of the Raja (of Skardu) “and regretted to hear that nothing can be done for our friends at Skardu in Little Tibet.”<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the British authorities were very much agitated at the prospect of Gulab Singh succeeding to General Avitabile to the Governorship of Peshawar. They suspected that after suppressing the Kashmir rebellion, his “next aim after securing for himself the control of the Government of Kashmir will probably be to obtain the Government of Peshawar.”<sup>28</sup> The influence of Dhian Singh was predominant in Sikh counsels ; and the English opinion of the ability of the Jammu Rajas and the excellence of their troops was well known, and induced a belief in partiality to be presumed.”<sup>29</sup> It was therefore proposed by Maharaja Sher Singh to bestow the Afghan Province on the restorer of order in Kashmir. “But this arrangement would have placed the hills from the neighbourhood of Kangra to the Khaibar Pass in the hands of men averse to the English and hostile to Shah Shuja ; and as their troublesome ambition had been checked in Tibet, so it was resolved that their more dangerous establishment on the Kabul river should be prevented.”<sup>30</sup> The British Government instructed its Political Agent, Mr. Clerk, to lodge a strong protest in the affair with Lahore Darbar “to make it known to the Darbar that the British Government could not view with indifference or satisfaction, any attempt on the part of Jammu family to add Peshawar to the many extensive provinces under their control.”<sup>31</sup>

Consequently, when the Lahore Darbar deputation, consisting of Munshi-Din-Muhammad and Colonel Mohan Lal, met Clerk the letter informed them that the British Govt. will not countenance the appoint-

26. ORPS, VII, 151/42A, of 8-4-1841, Clerk to Mackeson

27. Cf. Mackeson's letter No. 40/24 of 18-7-1840 and No. 4½/37 of 10-8-1840, ORPS, VIII.

28. ORPS, VII. 152/14 of 4-7-1841, Clerk to Maddock No. 109 of 9-7-1841.

29. J. D. Cunningham's *Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 221.

30. *Ibid.* Also Govt. to Mr. Clerk, 2nd Aug. and Mr. Clerk to Govt. 20th August, 1841 N. A. 1.

31. E. P. PRO-30/12, II(i) Maddock to Clerk.

ment of the Raja to the Governorship of Peshawar"<sup>32</sup>. In the autumn of 1841, therefore, the veto of the English Agent was put upon Raja Gulab Singh's nomination to Peshawar."<sup>33</sup> This Dogra British rivalry in the politics of the Punjab and the British attempts to thwart Dogra ambitions for expansion of territory and influence toward Kashmir Valley and Peshawar, compelled the Dogra Rajas to carry on secret intrigues with Nepal and Kabul. Gulab Singh also found it convenient to look towards Himalayan territories where the British had neither sway for any influence. He was driven towards Ladakh and Baltistan on these considerations. He aspired for the conquest of Western Tibet on similar grounds.

There was yet another cause which drove Gulab Singh recklessly towards east of Ladakh in order to touch the Nepalese broder as early as possible. The party politics at Lahore was taking a dangerous turn. Several courtiers were playing in the hands of the British Agents. There was a concerted intrigue going on for weakening Dogra hold on the administration of the Lahore Kingdom and to do away with their influence. An attempt was being made by Maharaja Sher Singh, at the instigation of his adviser, Bhai Gurmukhsingh, to reduce the authority in the conduct of affairs, "which has so long been beneficially exercised by the Jammu Raja, Dhian Singh,"<sup>34</sup> a move in which several influential courtiers like Lehna Singh Majithia, Jamadar Khushal Singh, Bhai Govind Ram and Ram Singh, Diwan Sawan Mal, General Ventura and others were arrayed against the Dogras. Thus "the minister who had gained such credit for his wisdom and forethought during the lifetime of the great Ranjeet, had been sacrificed to party feelings."<sup>35</sup> The Sikh Army was also getting out of control and a communal hatred was being generated in the ranks against the Dogra Rajas. To crown all, the Khalsa Maharaja and some of his courtiers were intriguing with the British authorities, the very antithesis of what Dogras stood for—a total abnegation of British interference in the affairs of Lahore Kingdom—a necessary condition for the perpetuation and independence of Sikh Raj. A shrewd observer even writes that Sher Singh was anxiously desirous of throwing himself unreservedly on British protection and that Lord Ellenborough would have kept him seated on the throne of Lahore at all

32. ORPS, 152/36/106-14, of 20-8-1841, Clerk to Maddock.

33. *Ibid.*

34. ORPS, 158/102 of 5-9-1843, Richmond to Thomason.

35. W. L. M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs, II*, p. 36.

hazards.”<sup>36</sup> Thus Maharaja Sher Singh, the Sindhian-walas, and others had become ready to become tributary, and to lean for support upon foreigners.”<sup>37</sup> To make matters worse confounded for Dogras, the Pro-British Maharaja Sher Singh yielded to the British mediation of conciliation with the Sindhanwalia Sardars, the common object of the English and the Khalsa Maharaja in such a move being to do away with the Dogra influence at Lahore Court. Unfortunately, the Sindhanwalias proved more vindictive than was expected and enacted the great tragedy by assassinating both the Maharaja and his Dogra minister. The leanings of the sovereign and his courtiers on British support had thus erased the very cardinal point of Dogra policy in the Lahore State. Raja Gulab Singh sagaciously realised that the days of the supremacy and influence of the Dogra Chiefs were drawing to a close due to narrow interests of Lahore. He found it necessary to counteract this by establishing a direct contact with Nepal by wading through Tibetan snows and high-altitude battles. The contemplated conquest of Western Tibet was not so much of an effort to break the isolation of Lahore Kingdom as it was an attempt on the part of the Dogras to find a new ally in Nepal to compensate for the loss of the one in Lahore, who was ready to make over to the English half of the Punjab in order to maintain his precarious hold on the other half with the British support. This probably accounts for the secrecy maintained by Raja Gulab Singh about his Tibetan exploits. Even Maharaja Sher Singh had no knowledge of these exploits and when he came to know of the affair through British Agent, he wrote to Raja Gulab Singh “to report on the truth or otherwise of the rumour regarding the occupation of some places in Chinese Tartary by Wazir Zorawar Singh.”<sup>38</sup> He was aware only that Zorawar Singh had probably coerced the tribes bordering on Ladakh for their carelessness.<sup>39</sup> The invasion of the Chinese Tartary was, therefore, the act of Jammu Rajas without the knowledge of the Darbar.<sup>40</sup>

The attempt to conquer Western Tibet was no doubt an act of the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh in pursuance of his objective of creating a hill kingdom for himself and counter-balancing British policy

36. Lieut. Col. Lawrence, in *Calcutta Review*, No. 11, p. 493—‘Adventures of an Officer’.

37. J. D. Cunningham, *Hist. of the Sikhs*, p. 256.

38. ORPS, VIII. 155/128, Lahore Darbar to Raja Gulab Singh.

39. 152/43/131-33 of 9. 9. 1847.

40. Maddock to Clerk, 11 July, 1841.

of encompassing the Sikh power of Lahore. With his piercing analytical pen Sir Henry Lawrence sums up Gulab Singh's objects in conquering the Himalayan Territories in the following words :

"Secretly looking forward like all the provincial Governors of the Sikh Territories, to the certain and not distant day when the Sikh Empire must fall to pieces, his constant endeavour was how, upon the nucleus and foundation of the Jammoo Chiefship, to build up for himself a hill sovereignty both on the southern and northern slopes of the Himalaya. In the prosecution of this policy, while appearing fully occupied with Sikh affairs in the Punjab plains he had during 1840 and 1841 annexed Iskardo, made Gilgit tributary, opened squabbles with Yarkand, seized Garoo, in Chinese Tibet (thus monopolising the trade in shawl wool), and made the frontier of Jammoo conterminous with that of the Goorkhas in Nepal,—no great friends of the British Empire in India.<sup>41</sup>

#### **The Battle Ground and the Incentive.**

Apart from diplomatic and commercial interests, the territories of Western Tibet offered to the Dogras another plea for conquest, which served as immediate cause for moving armed forces into the Tibetan Region. Up to the reign of Singge Namgyal in Ladakh (A.D. 1600-1645) the region of Western Tibet formed a part of the Ladakhi Kingdom. As a result of Ladakhi-Tibetan war of 1684 A.D. Singge Namgyal had to cede these territories, from the borders of present Ladakh upto the Mar-Yum Pass, to Lahasa. Wazir Zorawar could therefore assert Ladakhi claims on these Tibetan provinces which lie to the east and south-east of Ladakh, and are known as Rudok, Chang-Thang (Shan-Tha) and Nagari.

Rudok lies immediately to the east of Ladakh and Rukshu, along the northern border of the lake of Pangkak (Pang-Kong) which stretches through the whole length of the country from east to west, a distance of about eighty miles. The province continues by the valley of Chushul, from which the capital or fort of Rudok is distant between three and four days' journey. The fort itself is situated on a hill in the midst of an extensive plain, about twenty miles south-east from the extremity of the Pang-Kong lake. The mean height of the plain is probably not under 14,500 feet, as the lake has an elevation of 14,200 feet above the sea."<sup>42</sup> It was inhabited chiefly by shepherds who subsist by the sale of their wool to the merchants at Leh. The province was subject to the authority of the Garphon of Chan-than.

41. Edwardes : *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, p. 225.

42. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, pp. 39-40 ; Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels*, p. 214.

In the south and east of Rudok lies the larger division of Chan-than (Chang-Thang) which is in contact with Ladakh, on the line of the Sinh-Kha-bab (the Indus) river. It comprises the two districts of Chumurti and Garo, also called Gardokh, Gartokh, or Ghertok. The monastery of Tashigong is the chief place in those districts. Garo itself was little else than an encampment, consisting of a number of blanket-tents, with a few houses of unburnt bricks, of a similar description as the houses of Ladakh. Sinh-Kha-bad river rises from the Kangari, or Kan-tisi, Tisi, or Kailas range to the south-east of Garo.

Chan-than was formerly subject to independent princes under the Lama of Lhasa. But in 1792, the Gurkhas having invaded the Southern Provinces, the Dalai Lama called the Chinese to his succour. The Chinese drove back the Gurkhas, but took the opportunity of establishing their own power in Tibet, and two Ambans, sent from Peking, permanently resident at Lhasa, engross the political administration of the state. From Lhasa two officers were sent to Garo as Garphons.<sup>43</sup>

Ngari (m Ngah-ris)<sup>44</sup> lies to the south of the Sinh-Kha-bad (Indus) river and embraces the whole of the Upper Valley of the Suttlej from the Manasarovara LAKE TO THE crest of the Porgyal mountain and is immediately contiguous to Piti (Spiti) and to the British dependencies of Bashahr and Kanawar. It is subdivided into three smaller districts, Guge, Gangri, and Purang. Guge is the largest of the three, and contains the well known towns of Tholing and Tsaparang. Gangri is the country around the holy lakes, the Purang is the upper valley of the Gogra or Karnali river.<sup>45</sup>

Chang-than was the Chief resort of the shawl-wool goat, and was also the pasturage of numerous flocks of sheep. The wool of Chan-than was sold to the Ladakhis alone by virtue of an ancient agreement.<sup>46</sup> Gulab Singh's one object, therefore, in conquering Ladakh, besides that of encircling Kashmir, was to gain access to this lucrative wool trade that normally flowed from the plains of North-Western Tibet (Chang-thang) through Ladakh to the looms of Kashmir. The disorders attending his conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan-enabled the British to divert the shawl wool trade to the factories of Bashahr, a circumstance which foiled the very objective of Gulab Singh in conquering Ladakh.

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43. H. H. Wilson : *Moorcroft's Travels*, pp. 216-17.

44. This district is called, Hyum-des-Sanskrit Hima-desa, by the Hindus of the cis-Himalaya ; 'hyum' being their term for snow, which is a literal translation of the Tibetan name of Kha-po-chan, or "snow-land".

45. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 40.

46. Moorcroft and Trebeck ; *Travels*, 1819-1825, p. 216.



“With Ladakh in his hands, all he needed to achieve a monopoly of the coveted wool trade was to annex those areas of Tibet from which wool came.”<sup>47</sup>

A. H. Francke<sup>48</sup> was of the opinion that the main reason for Zorawar’s new plan of Tibetan conquest was to give employment to his master’s many new subjects in Ladakh and Baltistan, and in this way to keep their thoughts from revolutionary ideas. It was also told to Zorawar Singh that monasteries were known to possess vessels and instruments of gold and silver for the service of religion, and that the country produced the finest shawl-wool. The plunder of the first would enrich himself and his men, and the acquisition of the latter would be highly pleasing to his master.<sup>49</sup>

Besides, he seems gradually to have discovered that he was a genius in conquering, and that his gift had to be given a new field of activity.<sup>50</sup> Elated with his success he threatened the neighbouring states, and even talked of invading Yarkand and Central Asia. But the Lhasan provinces of Rudok and Ngari were more accessible, and about these he had been told that these once belonged to Ladakh and had been alienated since the time of Singge Namgyal (1770-1790 A. D.), about sixty years ago. The unscrupulous conqueror, therefore, revived old claims of Ladakh to those districts, and backed his claims by the advance of arms into the Tibetan Frontier, signalling thus a general war on ‘Lhasan territories to the West of Mayum Pass.

The Dogra thrust towards the East of Ladakh, however, was not an affair of Wazir Zorawar Singh’s occasional whim. As has been explained above, it was a considered move of Gulab Singh and was intelligently timed to synchronise with the British move on Kabul with a view to offset political attainments thereof. And it was a strange coincidence that both these expeditions ended in complete disaster to the discredit of their conceivers.

### **Towards the Conquest of Ngari (Western Tibet)**

In 1841 the time seemed opportune for Gulab Singh to materialise his ambition of conquering the provinces of Western Tibet which once belonged to the Kingdom of Ladakh as late as the last quarter of the

47. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 4.

48. Francke, A. H. : *A History of the Western Tibet*, p. 161.

49. Cunningham, Sir A. : *Ladak*, p. 351.

50. Francke, A. H. : *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 161.

seventeenth century. The Sikh Kingdom of Lahore had been shaken by internal dissensions after Ranjit Singh's death in June 1839. The British were pre-occupied in saving their face in Afghanistan and Burma, where troubles were brewing up. The Chinese were absorbed in their attempt to vomit out British opium which the traders of East India Company sought to force down the Chinese gullet.

Similarly, Nepal, once a power to reckon with was weakened by factional struggle. "In Tibet itself, there was considerable turmoil arising from a power struggle between the Regent of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan ministers."<sup>51</sup>

Gulab Singh's military commander in Ladakh, Wazir Zorawar Singh, soon found out a pretext for mobilisation on territories of Western Tibet to the West of Mayum Pass, called m-Ngaris or Ngari or Nars. He was told that in the best times the West Tibetan Empire of Ladakh comprised these provinces of Ngari. Rudok, Guge, and Purang in Western Tibet had formed part of the Ladakhi Kingdom prior to 1684. In that year Ladakhis lost these territories to Lhasa in a battle fought in the reign of Deleg Namgyal (1675-1705 A.D.).<sup>52</sup> Therefore, the Dogras as the present masters of Western Tibet (Ladakh and Baltistan), revived the claims to those outlying districts.<sup>53</sup> Wazir Zorawar Singh wrote to the governor (Garphon) of these districts not to supply Pashmeena Shawl-Wool to any other area except Ladakh, and he also demanded tribute from him.<sup>54</sup> But the Garphon sent only five horses and five mules.<sup>55</sup> The Dogra General was offended at this, and he ordered his forces to move into Ngari to occupy it for Raja Gulab Singh.

Soon the news of this move flashed around, although the contemplated attack on Western Tibet had been attended with much secrecy as was done earlier in the case of Ladakh. Mr. G. R. Clerk, the Governor-General's Agent to the North-Western Frontier received the first vague intelligence of a collision having occurred between the troops of Zorawar Singh and the militia of Bashahr at some place near the frontier of Ladakh. Mr. Clerk also remarked on the designs of Wazir

51. Fisher, Huttenback, etc.: *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 4.

52. S. C. Bajpai, *The Northern Frontier of India*, 1970, pp. 13-14; L. Petech, "The Tibetan-Ladakhi Moghul War of 1681-83." in *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, XXIII, Sept. 1947, pp. 169-99.

53. Francke, A. H., *A Hist. of the Western Tibet*, p. 161.

54. *Sec. Prodge*, June 21, 1841, No. 15 (NA.).

55. *Ibid.*

Zorawar Singh on Kanawar and Ruthok (Rudok).<sup>56</sup> A month after this, in the middle of July, the Commissioner of the British District of Kumaon, received a report from the Rawal of the Badrinath temple about the capture of Gartok by a Sikh (Dogra) force and defeat of the Tibetan authorities, who had endeavoured to oppose their further progress.<sup>57</sup> The British Resident at Kathmandu also confirmed a similar intelligence received by the Raja of Nepal.<sup>58</sup> The commissioner of Kumaon was further informed that the Sikhs (i.e. Dogras) were conducting operations against Gartok in conjunction with the Ladakhis.<sup>59</sup>

By the middle of June 1841 Zorawar was reported to have moved his troops into the outposts of Western Tibet. His army of invasion has been estimated by A. H. Francke at 6000-7000 Dogras in addition to Baltics and Ladakhis, a total of about 10,000.<sup>60</sup>

Of Ladakhis the greater part had to do transport work, and each peasant was carrying 240 pounds on horses, Yaks, donkeys or on his own back.<sup>61</sup> But the combatants did not exceed 5000. Only 2000 of these were Dogras from Jammu and Kishtwar<sup>62</sup> and the remaining were from Ladakh and Baltistan.<sup>63</sup> The number may even have been less.<sup>64</sup> Most of the Dogra soldiers carried matchlocks, shields and swords. They had about a dozen small guns, probably jingals,<sup>65</sup> of which some eight or nine were later on mounted on the ramparts of Chi-t'ang fort. These were probably carried by men. As the advance into Western Tibetan plateau was begun at the commencement of Indian summer the soldiers of Zorawar wore light clothes to which they were used to in their Ladakhi expeditions.

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56. *ORPS*, VII. 151/67, No. 85 of 15-6-1841, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

57. *ORPS*, VII. 54/17, 15-7-1841.

58. *ORPS*, VII. 54/30 of 31-7-1841, B. H. Hodgson to G. R. Clerk.

59. *ORPS*, VII. 128/125, pp. 246-48.

60. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of Western Tibet* p. 162.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Sir A. Cunningham, *Ladakh*, p. 351.

63. *Sec. Consult.* Nos. 36-38, of 1-11-1841.

64. 4,000 according to the authors of *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 50: "Over 3,000 Ladakhi barbarians and Shen-pa aborigines" according to the Chinese General pi-hsi (Meng-pao's *Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu*).

The force which Zorawar mustered for the final battle of To-Yo was estimated by the Chinese at about 3,000 men, with 600 in reserve and additional 500 in the Chi-t'ang fort under Basti Ram. Some 500 more may have been posted at five or six military posts, in fifties or hundreds to safeguard the route of advance from Rudokh to Taklakot.

65. *Sec. Consult.* No. 23 of 22-11-1841, Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841.

It seems that Zorawar had gathered full information about the military strength of Tibetans at various outposts and also about the situation and duration of important military concentrations in Ngari, which he planned to conquer simultaneously and surprisingly.

He had probably anticipated all the hurdles to be encountered in a conquering march over a cold plateau about 15,000 feet above sea level, covering a distance of about 450 miles to the farthest point he wanted to reach to the immediate west of the Mayum pass. According to survey of the Chinese officials the distance between the Mayum Pass and Central Tibet (i. e. Lhasa) is more than 3,000 li, and from Mayum Pass to Ladakh (Leh) is 1,700 li.<sup>66</sup> The most frequented trade route between Leh and Mayum Pass, which ran through the middle of Ngari division claimed by the Dogras, passed from Leh to Chibra and lay up the Valley of the Indus and generally along the bank of the river upto Garo (Gartok). The distance from Leh to Garo is not less than 350 miles,<sup>67</sup> or about 35 days' journey. From Garo the road descended to the Manasarovara lake, a distance of 110 miles, or ten days' journey over several lofty spurs of the Kailash Range and around the lake of Rawan Hrad.

In order to encompass the territory intended to be conquered and occupied Zorawarsingh decided to march the main body of the Dogra force on Ngari from its North-Western fringe into the lake district of Rudok (Ruthog) along the south bank of the Pangonk Lake. With a view to comb simultaneously the territories adjoining Ladakhi and Indian frontiers, he planned to thrust two more spearhead columns which traversing and occupying chief places, should effect a junction with his main force at Gartok, where they expected a strong resistance from the Tibetans, and thence to march on Tirathpuri and the Lake district of Purang where the main Tibetan force could be expected to give them the decisive battle.

Before leaving on the conquest of Tibet, Zorawar Singh secured his rear and made it sure that Ladakh and Baltistan remained peaceful, and loyal. For this purpose, and perhaps in order to test the fealty of his new subjects and their chiefs, Zorawar not only sent their leaders at the head of conquering columns, but also mobilised the armed Balti and Ladakhi population to accompany Dogra armies as auxiliary columns. Thus the Ladakhi Chief, Nono-bsodnams (Nono-Sodnam), the minister of

66. Meng-Pao's 'Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu', in *Himalayan Battleground*; p. 158.

67. Sir A. Cunningham *Ladakh*, pp. 158-159.

Bazgo ; Ghulam Khan, the deposed chief of Baltistan ; M-Gon po, the steward of the famous Hemis monastery ; and the minister Sa-bi, "and all other great councillors and soldiers went to make war against M-Nah-ris" (Nari)<sup>68</sup> as equal partners of the Dogras. The Hemis monastery alone contributed 12,000 bushels of grain, 300 horse load and 70 horses. The Ladakhis and Baltis seem probably as much excited as their Dogra copartners on the expected conquest of the territories, which were formerly a part of their kingdom,

The expedition was planned during April, 1841 and the movement of troops towards the borders of Ngari started by the month of May 1841. Wazir Zorawar Singh had conceived of his expedition on a bold design and seemed to organise it in such a manner as to fulfil the task well before the close of campaigning season. Accordingly, his thrust into the Ngari territories was three pronged. In addition to his own main force, two smaller columns of about 300 to 500 men each, marched from south-eastern corner of Ladakh through Rupsu, one under Ghulam Khan, the former ruler of Skardu (Baltistan) and the other under Nono-Sodnam, the brother of the former Ladakhi King, who was placed on the gaddi by Zorawar Singh in 1836.

Both these columns moved and entered Tibetan Territory before Zorawar Singh advanced with the main force. The Balti Chief, Ghulamkhan, was the first to lead his 300 men along the borders of Kulu and Kumaon. Swayed by religious zeal, he visited with destruction all the chief places known for Buddhist Gonpas. The first victim of his plundering and iconoclastic zeal was Hanle in Ladakh itself. Then he stormed the Tibetan military posts of Churitt, Chumurti, Tsaparang and Daba, along the borders of Kulu and Bashahr. He was quite successful in his "congenial occupation of plundering the monasteries and temples. The work he executed with icono-clastic fury. The gold and the silver were reserved for his master ; but the plastic images of clay, the books and the pictures excited the religious bigotry of the Musalman, and were indiscriminately destroyed."<sup>69</sup> He then turned east from Daba, over-ran the district headquarters of Tholing and joined the main force under Zorawarsingh at Garo (Gartok). He met some resistance at Tsaparang and Tholing ; but the Tibetans were easily defeated and their leaders were slain.

68. A. H. Francke : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*. p. 133.

69. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 352.

The Ladakhi chief marched along the Indus river and conquered and plundered the famous Tashigong monastery town and other surrounding places.

Wazir Zorawar Singh himself led the main force of about 3,000 Dogra Soldiers, and advanced along the road south of Pangkong Lake in May. From Chushul he entered the Tibetan District of Rudok (Ruthog) and conquered the place on 5 June 1841, and took the Garpon prisoner.

He then moved south where he joined forces with the first two divisions under Nono-Sodnam and Ghulam Khan, and captured Gartok, district headquarters for West Tibet on the old caravan route between Leh and Lhasa. The place had already been evacuated by the Tibetans and hence was easily conquered.<sup>70</sup> The whole force now took a southeasterly direction along the ancient caravan route between Ladakh and Lhasa. At a place named Dagpacha, near Misra, a regular dak post on the Gartok-Lhasa route, about one day's march from the famous Lakes Manasarovar and Rakastel,<sup>71</sup> the Governor of Gartok had collected about 1,200 men from the locality and a few hundred Jukpas tribesmen,<sup>72</sup> to resist the Dogra advance. But the Tibetans could not stem the tide of Dogra invasion by local resistance. In an action fought on 7th August, some casualties were suffered by both sides, and Tibetans fled towards Taklakot—a place about fifteen miles from the border of Nepal. Wazir Zorawar Singh advanced on his march of conquest for Taklakot, thereby to occupy the entire region upto the Mayum Pass.

The advance of Dogra and Ladakhi forces into Ngari and occupation by them of important military posts of Daba, Tsaparang, Gartok, Karding, Taklakot, was not an easy runover but was acquired after meeting and overcoming considerable resistance.

The Chinese account of the Dogra-Tibetan War of 1841, reveals the promptitude with which the Chinese and Tibetan authorities reacted to Dogra conquests and the stubborn resistance offered by them.

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70. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* ; No. 46, of 27. 9, 1841, Lushington to Thompson.

71. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* No. 18 of 13. 9. 1841.

72. Jukpas or Chukpas was a tribe of robbers which infested Western Tibet at that time. As this tribe was partially organised and well-armed, it was taken into service by the local Tibetan authorities and pressed against the Dogras. C. L. Dutta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 134. n ; *JASB*, XII, Pt. I (1844), pp. 182-83.

Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu (Tibetan Memorial and Reports), an official compilation by Meng Pao, the Chinese Imperial Resident at Lhasa (1839-1844 A.D.), deals in detail with this affair. Meng Pao reports to the Emperor of China that as the Chief of Ladakh, in league with the Shen-pa ('Singh'—people, i.e., Dogras) had occupied certain areas of Tibet, Tibetan officers had to be sent with troops to deal with the situation. In the 4th month of Chinese calendar (May 21-June 19), the military post official at Gartok reported that he received a message from Shen-pa leader that their combined force numbering over 400 men, was advancing towards the Tibetan border on a pilgrimage to the Hsueh Shan (Mount Kailash). The official feared lest some incident might occur, and he therefore requested that the officer in charge of frontier be sent to look into the situation. Consequently, Jai-pon (general) Pi-hsi of Central Tibet was immediately ordered to hurry there and take steps to prevent the entry of "this aboriginal force." The General departed, arranged affairs there and reported back, and his report was received by the Imperial Resident at Lhasa on 15 August, 1841. The General learnt that "over 3,000 Ladakhi barbarians and Shen-pa aborigines" had already assembled at Gartok before his arrival there. In "ten days they had occupied the two Tibetan posts of Rudok and Gartok. The general added that "The invaders intend to conquer all the territory up to the Mayum Pass and force the people there to dress in their fashion and lend them assistance. As things are they will soon reach the Tibetan post at Pui ren (Purang-Taklakot). The situation has become very serious."<sup>73</sup>

The Tibetan mobilisation was prompt and adequate. General Pi-hsi gathered together 500 local troops and encamped at Kardung, and demanded immediate reinforcements. One thousand Tibetans—"all skilled soldiers with bows and arrows or fowling pieces," from Central Tibet, and one thousand additional local troops from Lhasa were sent. These troops left on 29 August, and hurried off to different strategic points to prevent any further encroachment. They were ordered to cooperate with General Pi-hsi.

But before the arrival of reinforcements, General Pi-hsi had worked up local resources, and on his arrival at Taklakot, he could muster a force of 1,000 local troops, which was divided and stationed as guards at different posts, one at Taklakote, to stop the Dogras. The Dogras had already occupied "the three military posts of Ta-pa-Ko-erh (Daba),

73. Meng-Pao's 'Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu', in *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 157.

Tsa-ren (Tsaparang), and Taklakot, on the 6th and 7th days of the 7th month (August 22, 23)."<sup>74</sup>

Gartok seems to have fallen to Zorawar in the first week of July, after about a month of the occupation of Rudok. Here the Tibetans offered some opposition. In the middle of July, 1841. Mr. G. T. Lushington, the Commissioner of Kamaon received a report from the Rawal of Badrinath temple about the capture of Gartok by a Sikh (Dogra) force and the defeat of the Tibetan authorities, who had endeavoured to oppose their further progress,<sup>75</sup> and the same intelligence was confirmed by the British Resident at Khatmandu.<sup>76</sup>

At Gartok the two columns under Ghulam Khan and Nono-Sodnum also joined Zorawar and now the combined force marched along the old trade route towards, Tirathpuri. At Dog Pacha, near Tirathpuri, another Tibetan force opposed the Dogra advance, but was beaten and both the posts were occupied by Dogras on 7th August.

General Pi-hsi was waiting for the arrival of the Dogras at Kardung where he organised a stiff resistance to the invaders in combination with the Gonpo of Gartok who had fled to Taklakot after his defeat. The opposition however broke down. "The fight took place against great odds," reported the general. "and both sides sustained some casualties. Because of the cowardice of the local troops, our forces had to withdraw to the foot of Tsa Mountain near the Mayum Pass."<sup>77</sup> After the withdrawal of the Tibetan General to the other side of the Mayum Pass, a Dogra force under Basti Ram was sent to occupy Dagla Kar or Taklakhar (Taklakot) in Purang, the fort of which place which the Dogras newly built was held by him with 500 men. Rahim Khan of Chusod near Leh was placed over Spiti. All the military posts conquered were garrisoned by Dogra contingents and the route of communications with Leh was made secure. Thus the occupation of Tibet west of Mayum Pass was complete by the middle of September. After making proper arrangements for guarding advance posts towards Mayum Pass, Wazir Zorawar Singh returned to Tirathpuri where he planned to winter. Thus had Dogras conquered 1700 li, or about 550 miles of Tibetan territory in about three months and a half.

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74. *Ibid.*

75. ORPS, No. 54/17 of 15-7-1841, Lushington to Clerk.

76. ORPS, No. 54/30 of 31-7-1841, B. H. Hodgson to Clerk.

77. Meng-Pao's '*Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu*,' p. 159.



The first thing Wazir Zorawar Singh did after the conquest of Misra was to take a holy bath in the Lake Manasarovara and offer a golden idol at the Kailash temple.<sup>78</sup>

On the eve of mobilising his troops into Tibet, he had already announced his intention to perform a pilgrimage of the holy place of the Manasarovara and the Kailash of the Hindu mythology a resolve which he now proudly fulfilled. As Rawling points out Lake Manasarovara and Mount Kailash are considered most sacred places by Hindus and Muslims alike. For centuries pilgrims have thronged there from the holy waters of the Lake ; a visit to these places ensures both sanctity and renown.<sup>79</sup>

Thus by fighting out his way to these holy places and earning the merit of pilgrimage of the Mount Kailash to which the heroes of the Mahabharata had earlier retired after attaining the glory and fame in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, Wazir Zorawar Singh had earned both sanctity and renown. He had achieved the pinnacle of glory. His downfall was imminent. The Chinese dragon had been provoked, the line of communication precariously extended, and the freezing, hostile winter was about to lash out with all its armies of snow and avalanche.

Zorawar, however, had not come to the Lake districts only for a pilgrimage. He had lasting designs on the region and desired to integrate it permanently to the Dogra Principality as he had done in the case of Ladakh. He took every step to give a settled administration to the conquered people and a security to his conquests. For this purpose, he stationed his own Dogra pickets at every important post, constructed fortresses and garrisoned it by his own men. The strategic places like Rudok, Gartok, Tirathpuri, Taklakot, Churit and Chumurti were properly fortified and garrisoned with Dogras, roads were repaired,<sup>80</sup> and arrangements set up to collect revenue according to the old practices.

Local Tibetan officials were associated in administration and were required to pacify the populace.<sup>81</sup> He also issued a Hukam-namah to the people at large that they should pay him taxes which heretofore they had been paying to the Tibetan authorities.<sup>82</sup> Zorawar Singh took special measures to regulate shawl-wool trade, and also commerce in

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78. *Sec. Consult. For Dept.*, No. 18 of 13-9-1841, Battan to Lushington.

79. C. G. Rawling, *The Great Plateau*, London. 1905. p. 263.

80. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 40 of 20. 12. 1841, Cunningham to Clerk, 8 November, 1841.

81. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 57 of 6.12.1841. Lushington to Secretary, 10 November. 1841.

82. *Sec. Predgs. For. Dept.*, No. 50 of 11.10.1841.

general. He ordered Tibetans to sell shawl-wool to the Ladakhis only according to the old practice, which had, as a result of disturbances attendant on his conquest of Ladakh, been directed towards Bashahr and the adjoining British Indian Territory. Those who sought to by-pass his orders were severely dealt with. The Bhotia traders of the British Territories of Kumaon and Garhwal, who traded with West Tibet or 'Undes', were also cessed as in the past.<sup>83</sup> The Bhotias had been alarmed at the Dogra conquest of 'Undes' or 'Hundes', the portion of Tibet adjoining Almora and Garhwal Districts, but the Wazir tried his best to allay their fears by providing necessary facilities for carrying on trade. With the same object in view Wazir Zorawar Singh sent colonel Basti Ram as his agent, to meet Mr. Lushington, the Commissioner of Kumaon. A meeting between the two diplomats took place at Kala Pani in Byans District of Kumaon, on 8th October 1841. "The Dogra dignitary told his British counter-part that Zorawar Singh was anxious to do everything to secure and place the commercial traffic of the Bhotias on its former footing."<sup>84</sup>

In a short span of three or four months Wazir Zorawar Singh had introduced in his newly conquered territory all the measures of administration and defence which he had tried successfully in Ladakh, directed towards the pacification of the populace and the permanent occupation of the Western Tibet.

In spite of all the British apprehensions and protests he seems to be determined on the annexation of the West Tibetan provinces to Gulab Singh's dominion.

As soon as Wazir Zorawar Singh received information of the arrival of Kahlon Surkhang and other Tibetan military officers on the east side of Mayum Pass, he opened negotiations for peace, "promising to withdraw on condition of a money payment (tribute) from Tibet."<sup>85</sup> He also desired the Tibetans to recognise him as the ruler of Western Tibet,<sup>86</sup> and to indemnify the cost of various actions fought by him.<sup>87</sup> He also demanded that the Tibetans should send all shawl-wool to Ladakh as

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83. *Sec. Consul. For. Dept.*, No. 46 of 11.10.1841, Lushington to Thompson, 20 September, 1841.

84. Lushington to Edwardes, 9 Oct. 1841, *Sec. Consult. For. Dept.* No. 36.

85. Mang-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu., in *Himalayan Battleground*, *Append.* p. 161.

86. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 36 of 1.11.1841, Lushington to Edwardes, 9 October, 1841.

87. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* No. 42. of 6.7.1842, Cunningham to Clerk, 3 May 1841.

had been done in the past, otherwise he threatened to invade Lhasa.<sup>88</sup> His prompt offer of withdrawal in case his terms were accepted, was perhaps expressive of his anxiety on the approaching winter. He had desired to withdraw to Ladakh for the winter in case Tibetan authorities agreed to pay a tribute as token of submission and allegiance to the Dogras. But the Tibetans seemed to be of the opinion that the Dogras were talking from the position of strength—"The invaders had first occupied our military post at Taklakot and then pretended to talk peace with us,"<sup>89</sup> and so their firm decision was that "Under no circumstances will indemnity be promised as that would deviate from all our fundamental rules."<sup>90</sup> This happened in the first week of November when the Vanguard of Tibetan winter had appeared and a grim struggle between the Tibetan and Dogra forces on the world's loftiest snow-covered plateau seemed unavoidable.

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88. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept. No. 36. of 1.11.1841.*

89. Meng Pao: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Himalayan Battleground*, Append. p. 162.

90. *Ibid.* p. 161.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# *The Great Reverse—Zorawar Singh's Last Struggle and Tibetan Offensive*

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### **The Tibetan Strategy**

The Lhasa authorities made frantic preparations to stem the Dogra onrush and to hurl them back. In addition to the force mobilised earlier by Pi-hsi and the Imperial Resident, they despatched another force comprising two Jupons (Fifth rank officers), four Chiapons (Sixth rank officers), and twenty Tingapons (Seventh rank officers) together with 500 Tibetan soldiers from U and Tsang on the 27th September. An additional force of 2,000 men was raised from U and Tsang. A much load constituting nine months' supply for the troops was provided.<sup>1</sup>

As narrated earlier, Kahlon Surkhang arrived at the head of a multitudinous force at Chu-hsu (Dokthal), a district in Tsang province east of Mayum Pass, on the 2nd October, surveyed the situation and reported that "They (Ladakhies) then made secret arrangements with the Shen-pa (Dogra) aborigines. They use the subterfuge of pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash and crossed into Tibet without permission, robbing the people and occupying five military posts inside Tibet. The invaders took advantage of their successes to make further advances. General Pi-hsi led some local soldiers in an attempt to resist them. More than twenty of the enemy (Dogras) and two of their officers were killed. On the Tibetan side, fifteen local soldiers and one Tibetan officer named Ch'ung-ren-pa were lost. The invaders then withdrew a short distance."<sup>2</sup> Kahlon Surkhang estimated the Dogra army more than 3,000 strong occupying military post at Taklakot, and in each of the other four posts the Dogras were reported to "have stationed 300-500 men and have strongly fortified their positions".<sup>3</sup> The Dogras had occupied the territory of Tibet to the extent of more than 1,700 li.

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1. Meng-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Himalayan Battleground* Append., p. 159.

2. *Ibid.* p. 161.

3. *Ibid.*

The Tibetan General Pi-hsi and Kahlon Surkhang were anxious to send reinforcements across the mountains to fight with the Dogras. But the winter had set in and the heavy fall of snow had blocked the passes. The Tibetan force, therefore, was unable to advance across the Mayum Pass, the route normally used by Tibetan Army, in view of the descending winter. But the Lhasa authorities rightly "apprehended that a long delay might hamper an attack by allowing the Dogra invaders grow stronger."<sup>4</sup> They, therefore, sought to take action without further loss of time. They divided the army. Some detachments were stationed at the different strategic passes to hold the Dogras back, while other troops were sent to Rudok via another route along the Matsang. It was decided to attack the Dogra positions from both front and rear, causing thereby lowering down of their morale. The indemnity which the Dogra General had demanded from the Lhasa authorities was under no circumstances to be promised.<sup>5</sup> The Tibetan had thus resolved on driving the Sikhs (i. e. Dogras) out of the Garo district.<sup>6</sup>

Descending from the by-pass of Ma-tsang the Tibetan force surprised and invested Taklakot early in November and sent detachments to surround the other Dogra military posts and pickets. The small Dogra garrison of about 100 soldiers at Karadam under the command of Awtara (Aitwara) Kishtwaria was put to the sword,<sup>7</sup> and Basti Ram who was beleaguered in Chi-t'ang fort near Taklakot, was cut off from the main Dogra army.

About the 7th November, 1841,<sup>8</sup> Zorawar Singh first heard of the approach of the Tibetan force. He sent a Ladakhi corps of about 300 men under Nono-Sodnam (the young brother of Chang Raphtan, the Kahlon of Bazgo), to oppose the advance of the Tibetan force. But the detachment was surrounded from all sides at Kardam Khar to the south of the Rawan Hrad Lake,<sup>9</sup> and was annihilated. The Tibetan account reveals that they had been attacked from the front while, at the same time, "our (Tibetan) courageous troops were secretly sent up the

4. Meng-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Himalayan Battleground*, *Append.* p. 161.

5. *Ibid.*

6. ORPS : 113/6, No. 6 of 23-11-1841, J. D. Cunningham, on deputation to the Frontier of Tibet, to G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor General N. W. F.

7. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* No. 106 of 7-2-1842, Lushington to Hamilton. 13 January, 1842.

8. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladakh*, p. 352

9. *Ibid.* Also see *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, No. 102 of 30-3-1842, Lushington, to Clerk, 12 February, 1842.

mountain from the rear. The invaders (Dogras) were thus attacked from all directions."<sup>10</sup> The fighting began on November 9, 1841, and lasted from 3 A.M. to 3 P.M. This force was found quite insufficient and almost cut to pieces. Ninety-five Shen-pas (Dogras) were killed and eighty-six captured, along with three turbaned Muhammadans of the Balti tribe. But the commander Nono escaped. The food supplies and amunitions stored in fortifications (of Kar-dam-Khar) all fell into Tibetan hands. The Tibetan loss was only thirteen killed and seventeen wounded, one officer killed and one wounded. After this success the Tibetans seemed to have regained all the strategic points at Kardung (Kar-dam-Khar) and Taklakot.<sup>11</sup>

On 19th of November, Nono-sondam was again detached with a larger force of 600 men under a joint command of himself and Ghulam Khan, but this party was also surrounded and annihilated and both the leaders were made prisoners.<sup>12</sup>

The Tibetan also captured four Dogra spies, who divulged the information that the conquerors had recently constructed a strong fortification at a place called Chi-t'ang, about 67-70 miles from Taklakot. On its walls were mounted two large and some 8 or 9 small cannons, and was strongly guarded by a force of over 500 men. It was also learnt by Lhasa Commanders that several thousand of Dogra forces were concentrated as reserves at Tang-la (Tirthapuri), where they had setup a big camp and prepared for further hostilities. This place was in communication with Kardung and Taklakot.<sup>13</sup> Tibetan officers with 1,100 soldiers were sent to guard the route and to cut off Dogra communications and invest their fortifications<sup>14</sup>. Fighting continued indecisively for about three weeks.

As a result of these skirmishes and the ravages of cold, some soldiers had started deserting Zorawar Singh's camp and taking shelter

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10. Meng-Pao: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu, 15a-17b in *Himalayan Battleground* Appnd., p. 162.

11. Meng-Pao: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu, fol. 15 a-17b, in *Himalayan Battleground. The Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh*, by Fisher, Rose, Huttenback, 1963, Appnd, p. 162; Sir A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 352; A. H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 163. Also see *Sec. con. For. Dept.*, No 75 of 7-2-1842, Cunningham to Clerk dated 27 December, 1841.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Meng Pao: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, 15 a-17 b, Appendix in *Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, pp. 162-63.

14. *Ibid.*

in the British territories.<sup>15</sup> The British authorities advised the commissioner of Kumaon that the best mode of disposing of the Sikh (Dogra) refugees was to provide for their actual wants and forward them to the Punjab.<sup>16</sup> A large Chinese force had advanced into the Poorungz (Purang Dzong) Pargana and had driven the Dogras before them ; the Dogras were forced to evacuate Taklakot, taking their prisoners with them, and the Tibetans had placed a small detachment of Gurkhas in the place. The intelligence of all these events was conveyed by J. D. Cunningham to his government, and also that the Sikhs (i.e. Dogra Army) were suffering greatly, from the weather and scarcity of provisions.<sup>17</sup>

### Struggle over Chi-T'ang Fort.

The Dogras had carefully selected a place with rugged physical features at Chi-t'ang where they recently built a very strong stone fort. From here they planned "not only to prevent Tibetan forces from advancing, but they also intended to make gradual encroachments upon Lhasa Territory."<sup>18</sup> The Tibetans therefore decided to take advantage of the winter months to launch strong attack against Shen-pas (Dogra people) at a time when their escape route through the mountains would be closed by snow storms.<sup>19</sup>

The Tibetans now directed their mite against the stone fort at Chi-t'ang. They repeatedly attacked the fort but the firing of the Dogra big guns from the fort made frontal assault impossible. On 25th November the Tibetans learnt that Wazir Zorawar Singh, the Dogra Commander, had come from Tirthapuri with over 3,000 men and camped at Kardung.<sup>20</sup> Probably he had decided to risk everything on a campaign to recapture Taklakot and had broken camp and led his army from Tirthapuri camp.<sup>21</sup>

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15. ORPS : 54/140, dated 10-11-1841, G. T. Lushington, Commissioner, Kumaon to Asstt. Secretary to Govt., N.W.P, 54/176, dated 29-11-1841, G. T. Lushington to G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor General, NWF.

16. ORPS : 85/267, p. 165, letter No. 266, dated 15-12-1841. G. R. Clerk to G. T. Lushington.

17. ORPS : 113/7, letter No. 7, dated 30-11-1841, J. D. Cunningham, Asstt. Agent on deputation to Bashahr frontier, camp Nummghea, near Shipki to G. R. Clerk.

18. *Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, 1963 p. 164

19. *Ibid.*

20. Meng-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, Appendix, *Himalayan Battleground*, 1963, p. 164.

21. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground*, 1963, p. 53.

On 26th November, the Wazir secretly sent one of his officers, named Mian Singh, with his men to cut the road which Tibetan soldiers usually took to get water. A detachment of the Tibetan surrounded this party and killed seven Dogras including their officer Mian Singh. The Wazir then sent another force to dislodge the Tibetans, but the same was repulsed with sixteen dead. At this the Dogra unit withdrew without being able to block the Tibetan water supply. On the 3rd December, Wazir Zorawar Singh divided his force into five units and advanced in five waves against Tibetan lines. But this plan also failed. Thirty Dogra soldiers were killed without any success.<sup>22</sup>.

### **The Battle of To-Yo**

Roused by these repeated defeats Wazir Zorawar Singh himself came with his troops to the rescue of the new fort at Chi-t'ang, where he wanted to join the force commanded by Mehta Basti Ram, and intending to occupy a place named To-yo, in order to cut the Tibetan supply line. The Tibetans immediately sent their troops to occupy To-yo by night before arrival of Dogras<sup>23</sup>. The Lhasa troops had, as per communication from the Patwari at Biyans, surrounded Zorawar Singh and his force at Misra where they had reached. The Kahlons also requested Lhasa authorities to send reinforcements. Consequently, 1,250 Tibetan cavalry "famous for generations" arrived at the front on December 11, 1841, along with two big guns,<sup>24</sup> in addition to some guns "too old and decayed for use" already sent.<sup>25</sup>

The Dogra General now realised his critical position. The enemy numbered over 10,000, or almost three times the strength of his own troops.<sup>26</sup> No help could be expected from the Dogra Rajas, who were deeply busy in their own affairs, quite oblivious of the position of their brave general. Raja Gulab Singh was engaged in helping the British in their Afghan War. Dhian Singh himself required the help of his hill troops to maintain his precarious position as Prime Minister. The time was mid-winter, and hundreds of miles of snow-covered road lay between him and his contingents at Leh and other military posts.

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22. Meng Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, Eng. trans. Appendix. *Himalayan Battleground*, 1963, p. 164.

23. Meng-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu, Eng. translation, appendix *Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, 1963, p. 164.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 352.



Zorawar had, however, sent for reinforcements from Leh and other Dogra posts.<sup>27</sup> Mian Magna, thanadar of Leh, and other Dogra officers incharge of fortified posts moved in haste towards Lake Manasarovara, where the fighting was going on, yet due to the closure of all the passes by snow, they were unable to reach the battle-field and returned to their respective posts.<sup>28</sup>

As such, Zorawar's only hope lay in effecting junction with Basti Ram's troops at Taklakot, or perhaps in taking shelter in the British Territory which lay nearby, as was expected by British authorities,<sup>29</sup> but all the roads had also been blocked by the Tibetan, who had closely beset the 'black devils ; as the Tibetan called Dogras.<sup>30</sup> On the 10th December, Wazir Zorawar Singh, therefore, moved to Kan-ru-mi-mu-na, a place near To-yo, where both the armies met in a deadly conflict. The Dogra General led an attack which was resisted by the Tibetan General Pi-hsi, who killed sixty-two Dogras and captured one large cannon<sup>31</sup>. The Dogras were very much furious and were determined to capture To-yo. During the night there was a great snow-storm, and snow accumulated to the depth of several feet, and the Dogras suffered severely, and some whose clothing was insufficient, died. Zorawar Singh threw up trenches and about these there was a three day combat.<sup>32</sup> The Tibetans laid an ambush in which the road was left open through the middle of their lines up which the Dogras could advance. The Dogras marched on To-yo from 7 A.M. to 9 A.M. on the 12th<sup>33</sup>

27. Prinsep, H. T. *Tibet, Tartary and Mangolia*, 1852, p. 23 ; *Sec. con. For. Dept.*, No. 75 of 7-2-1842, and No. 17 of 27-12-1841.

28. Cunningham to Clerk, 6 January 1842, referred to by C. L. Dutta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973, p. 139.

29. *ORPS*, 128/227, pp. 467-68, 10-12-1841. R.N.C. Hamilton, officiating Secretary to the Govt. of N.W.F., to T. H. Maddock, Secty. to the Govt.

30. See C. L. Dutta, *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973, p. 139.

31. Fisher, Rose, Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground*, 1963, Append. p. 165

32. A. H. Francke ; *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 163.

33. The authors of *Himalayan Battleground* give December 14, 1841 as the date of Zorawar Singh's death, which they had calculated from Meng Pao's '*Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu*', translated into English and appended to their work. (see n. 26 on p. 26 and Append. p. 165).

S. C. Bajpai also followed that date in his book '*The Northern Frontier of India*, p. 44. Sapru, *Gulab Singh*, p. 28, p. n 3, has also adopted that date. J. D. Cunningham in his Intelligence report to Clerk sent on 4 March, 1842, concurs with this date. But Sir A. Cunningham, *Ladakh*, p. 352 and A. H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 163, give 12 December as the date of this event. A letter of G. T. Lushington, Commissioner Kumaon, dated 13-12-1841

December, 1841 and fell into the ambush and their rearguard was cut off and would not manoeuvre. They were attacked by the Tibetans from all sides. The same day, i.e. 12th December, Zorawar Singh received a bullet in his right shoulder, and as he fell from his horse the Tibetans made a rush. He was, however, not ready to give in at once, and seized his sword with his left hand. But the Tibetans knew very well that the general was wounded. They made a rush on the trenches, and a Tibetan horse-man thrust his lance through his breast, and he was beheaded. Also about forty higher and lower officers of his army and 200 of his soldiers were killed.<sup>34</sup>

The Dogra troops were soon thrown into disorder and fled on all sides. Their reserve of 600 men surrendered their arms.<sup>35</sup> All the principal officers were captured. One large cannon together with its mount, one large iron cannon and six flags were captured by Tibetans, along with numerous muskets, daggers, can-shields and the like. The Ladakhi chief of Zorawar's army, Nono-b-Sodnams (Nono Sodnam) and others surrendered their arms and were all imprisoned in the post of Taklakot.<sup>36</sup>

Out of the whole Dogra Army, amounting, with its camp followers, to 6,000, not more than 1,000 escaped alive and of these some 700 were prisoners of war.<sup>37</sup> The son of Kahlon Surkhang escorted the head of the Wazir to Mang Pao at Lhasa, where after a close examination, the head was placed at a thoroughfare in Lhasa for the public to view "manifestation of the power of the national law."<sup>38</sup> The Ladakhi Chief Ghulam Khan and Nono Sodnam and the Khan of Balti, along with other prisoners were taken to Lhasa for trial, where they were treated variously, but on the whole kindly. The fate of Ghulam Khan, who revelled in destroying Buddhist idols and monasteries was however, deplorable. He was slowly tortured to death with hot irons.<sup>39</sup> Ahmed Shah, the ex-ruler of Skardo and

(Bk. No. 54, Sr. No. 201 ORPS) communicates the intelligence of the defeat of Wazir Zorawar Singh by the Tibetan force. This first intelligence supports the date of December 12, see also Hashmat-Ullah-Khan, p. 389, who gives the Bikrami date 27th Maghar, 1898. The Gulabnama has only the month Maghar, 1998' for the event (p. 281).

34. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback ; *Himalayan Battleground*. 1963, p. 165.

35. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 352.

36. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground*. Append, p 165.

37. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 353.

38. Meng Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu Cf. *Himalayan Battleground*, Append., p. 166.

39. A. H. Francke : *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 164.

his favourite son Ali Muhammad were also among the prisoners. The old man was treated with kindness and even with distinction ; but the broken-hearted grandee pined and died in a few months. Rai Singh, Zorawar Singh's second in command was also among prisoners. For his release Raja Gulab Singh wished the Governor-General to intercede with the Lhasa Authorities<sup>40</sup> Chang-Nabdan, the Kahlon of Bazgo, and his brother Nono-Sodnam, were considered particular friends of the invaders and were therefore treated more harshly than the multitude. Except in the case of a few officers, all other prisoners were treated kindly and were sent to Lhasa. After some years some of them joined Tibetan service and married Tibetan wives.<sup>41</sup> Through the intercession of British Government and the mediation of the Nepalese representative at Lhasa, Maharaja Gulab Singh got released a few of the prisoners. Only fifty six of them returned to Jammu via Nepal,<sup>42</sup> while the remaining preferred to settle in Tibet and refused to leave the country.<sup>43</sup>

The one great cause of the Dogra defeat was the extreme cold and deep snow. "The Indian soldiers of Zorawar Singh," writes A Cunningham,<sup>44</sup> "fought under very great disadvantages. The battlefield was upward of 15,000 feet above the sea, and the time mid-winter, when even the day temprature never rises above the freezing point, and the intense cold of night can only be borne by people well covered with sheep-skins and surrounded by fires. For several nights the Indian Troops had been exposed to all the bitterness of the climate. Many had lost the use of their fingers and toes, and all were more or less frostbitten. The only fuel procureable was the Tibetan furze, which yields much more smoke than fire; and the more rackless soldiers had actually burned the stock of their muskets to obtain a little temporary warmth. On the last fatal day not one-half of the men could handle their arms."

The breakdown of Zorawar's commissariat arrangements also adversely effected his war potential. The barren and sparsely papulated plains of Western Tibet could not keep up the efficiency of even a few thousand Dogra Sepoys. When winter blocked all the passes, the invaders found it difficult to procure adequate supplies from the country around, or

40. Sir A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, 354.

41. *Sec. Con. For. Dept.*, No. 16 of 30-1-1857 ; A. H. Francke : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, p. 255.

42. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 22 January, 1857.

43. *Sec. Con. For. Dept.* No. 16 of 30-1-1857. Also the following letter in State Archives Repository, Jammu.

44. A. Cunningham : *Ladak*, p. 354.

from Ladakh. "While facing starvation in the chilly climate of the Land of Snow, it was hardly possible to fight with a large army which was well-supplied with provisions and was better-equipped."<sup>45</sup>

Another cause seems to be that many of the Baltis and Ladakhis and the local Hunias deserted the invaders and joined the Tibetan arms. This must have undermined Zorawar's war strategy at the eleventh hour. The diplomatic treachery can also not be ruled out. The British pressure for evacuation of Dogra conquests and efforts at mediation seem to have put Zorawar Singh off his guard. On the eve of Tibetan advance on Taklakot, he had actually recalled his advance posts<sup>46</sup> stationed to block all passes and by-passes through which Tibetan Armies could cross down to the Manasarowar Lake plains. In the absence of advance posts Zorawar Singh received no timely news of the massing of Tibetan troops on the west of Mayum Pass. When he received the news it was too late. The Tibetans had already occupied Kardum and a area between Zorawar Singh and Colonel Basti Ram and other Dogra officers stationed to the south and east of Manasarowar Lake. The defeat of the Dogras under such circumstances was not something unexpected, though much shocking as it came about when British politicals were contemplating Zorawar's withdrawal by the Maharaja of Lahore and the Dogra-British rivalry in Punjab politics was about to take a serious turn.

When Wazir Zorawar Singh was killed all the troops dispersed in confusion in various directions. But death was waiting for all of them. The Tibetans pursued them, well knowing that the unrelenting frost would spare no one. The garrison of Taklakot also fled precipitately even over the snowy mountain range, near the head of the Kali river, into British Territory of Kumaon. But in this unopposed flight one-half of the fugitives were killed by frost or fell off the cliffs, and several of the remainder lost their fingers and toes. It was reported that a total of 836 surrendered. Thirteen Dogras chiefs, including Rai Singh, were captured and were sent to Lhasa under escort.<sup>47</sup>

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45. C. L. Dutta : *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics*, 1973, p. 143.

46. "...that in the meantime, orders were received by the Vuzeer from Raja Dhian Singh desiring him to return to Ladakh, 'that the Vuzeer had in consequence recalled his officers and troops in advance, who joined him on the other side of Lasso..." *Punjab Akhbar*, No. 614, dated 22nd November, 1841. (Mughar or Aghan), N. A. I., New Delhi.

47. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground-Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh*, London, 1963, p. 167.

**Aftermath**

Encouraged by the destruction of Dogra troops, the Tibetans planned carefully the movements of their troops to attack the remaining four military posts still in Dogra possession, in order to exterminate the invaders. They had besieged the fort of Taklagarh (Chi-T'ang into which Zorawar Singh (i. e. Basti Ram, as Zorawar Singh had been killed on 12th December) has thrown himself with the whole of the force.<sup>48</sup> They did not think prudent to permit "the enemy (Dogras) a breathing spell in which they could prepare another attack."<sup>49</sup> The new fort built by Dogras at Chi-T'ang had now been isolated. It had been attacked repeatedly by the Tibetan soldiers, who were secretly sent by night to bypass this fort. Colonel Basti Ram, the commander of the fort, had also tried to join Zorawar Singh, but finding the way blocked, he had to return to the fort. From here he made sorties which enabled him to set things right in the fort.<sup>50</sup> He held out there for about a month.

But the Tibetan soldiers were sent to various points to cut the invader's supply lines, and all the Dogra soldiers engaged in transporting supplies were killed. Then it snowed for nine days. The Dogras fell short of food, so they planned to escape to a place called Chiang Nor. But that day Tibetans received fresh reinforcements and a few big guns, so they besieged and *consulted* Chi-t'ang Fort at Taklakot. The walls gave way under the heavy fire, but the Dogras resisted the attack to death. More than 300 Dogras were killed there. Chi-t'ang Fort was thus captured by the Tibetans who also siezed there over 700 different types of weapons, daggers, etc.<sup>51</sup> Here the Tibetans rescued Chie-mei-pa, the Tibetan officer of the Taklakot military post, who was found buried in the ground upto his head.

The Dogras who fled from Chi-t'ang Fort near Taklakot were pursued by the Tibetans. Fifty two of them were killed at Chiang-Nor. Their horses and weapons were also captured. Another 148 Dogras were either killed or captured by Kahlon Rajas in Tun-sa-lung valley. Now

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48. ORPS, 113/12 Letter No. 12 of 27-12-1841, from J.D. Cunningham to G.R. Clerk,

49. Frisher, Rose and Huttenback : *Himalayan Battleground* ; Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladakh, London, 1963, p. 166.

50. Sec. Con. For. Dept., No. 5 of 27-12-1841 and No 130 of 3-1-1842.

51. Meng-Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Himalayan Battleground*, Append, p. 167.

the Chi-t'ang area had been cleared of the Dogra invaders and the new fort had been demolished.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, it can be seen that Mehta Basti Ram, the commandant of the Chi-t'ang Fort at Taklakot had not fled away all at once on hearing about the disaster which befell Zorawar Singh. He held the fort bravely for several days after the battle of To-Yo. J. D. Cunningham informed his government on 17th December that the Chinese had dispossessed the Sikhs (Dogras) of an advance post in the pargana of Poorungz (Purang Dzung) and stationed 200 men in the village of Taklagarh, the Sikhs (Dogras), however, still occupy the fort.<sup>53</sup> Basti Ram and his 500 men held out the fort for many days more and made frequent sallies so that even on 24th December the British Agent in Bushahr received the intelligence regarding a victory gained by the Dogras over the Chinese Force which had advanced into the Poorungz pargana though it sounded somewhat doubtful.<sup>54</sup> The Chi-t'ang Fort of Taklakot may have fallen to the Tibetans by the first week of January 1842, and Basti Ram, with 240 sepoys, had escaped by 9th January 1842, into the British Territory at Askot and had expressed his desire to come to Almora.<sup>55</sup> He probably entered British Territory by Lapu Lekh pass. Basti Ram and his companions were rendered all possible help by Mr. Lushington, the Commissioner of Kumaon. Basti Ram also wrote an 'arzi,' sealed by his own seal, describing what had befallen to him and Zorawar Singh, and the same was forwarded by Mr. Lushington on 16th January.<sup>56</sup> Later on Basti Ram and 127 of his followers were permitted to leave for Ludhiana in the month of July 1842, whereas forty men who were unable to move, were left at Almora.<sup>57</sup>

The Chi-t'ang Fort at Taklakot might have fallen on 2nd or 3rd January, 1842. The British Agent heard the report of this event from the Tibetan Commander of a village of Chipki on 5th January, and that the Sikh Army had been dispersed and their leader, probably, Rai

52. *Ibid.* p. 168.

53. ORPS : 113/9, No. 9, of 17-12-1841, Cunningham from Camp Chooret to G. R. Clerk.

54. ORPS : 113/11, pp. 35-6, No. 11 of 24-12-1841, Cunningham to G.R. Clerk.

55. ORPS : 55/3, p. 12, dated 9-1-1842, J. H. Batten to T. C. Robertson.

56. ORPS : 55/17, p. 36, dated 16-1-1842, Mr. Lushington, Commissioner of Kumaon to the Government.

57. ORPS : Bk. 55, S. No. 22, p. 38, dated 18-7-1842, G. T. Lushington, Commissioner Kumaon to G. R. Clerk, Agent N.W.F.

Singh, imprisoned. The Lhasa authorities intended to march on Ladakh within the next four months.<sup>58</sup> Strangely enough, the British diputee to the Bashahr frontier informed the "leaders of the Chinese" at this stage that the British Government disapproved of the occupation of the Garoo District by the Sikhs (Dogras), that the Maharaja had ordered Wazir Zorawar Singh to withdraw to Ladakh and that Lt. Cunningham had come to see whether the order was obeyed.<sup>59</sup>

As soon as Zorawar Singh had received the intelligence of the unexpected arrival of the Tibetan forces on 6th November, 1841, he had immediately sent for reinforcements. But as passes and roads had been blocked by snow, messengers could not arrive in time. As late as January 6, 1842 Sikh troops were moving towards Garo, and people of Spiti had been called upon to furnish their quota of militia to aid Zorawar Singh. Reinforcements had hurriedly been despatched from Jammu and Ladakh.<sup>60</sup> A Ladakh contingent under Pehlwan Singh Commandant, Guran Ditta Munshi and Tegh Singh Subadar, had moved hurriedly towards Tibet. But they were at a great distance from the battlefield when they heard of Zorawar Singh's death and destruction of the Dogras at To-Yo. They therefore retreated to the fort of Leh and set themselves to strengthen their fortifications.<sup>61</sup>

The British authorities, however, instructed their Assistant Agent, J. D. Cunningham, to make the Tibetan authorities understand that the British Government will not contenance any encroachment beyond "the western limits of the conquests made by the Jammu Rajas in the name of Ranjit Singh in 1836 and 1837."<sup>62</sup>

After re-capturing Taklakot and Chi-t'ang the Tibetan Troops proceeded to Gartok which had previously been the headquarters for all the military posts in that area. Kahlon Surkhang was stationed there by the Tibetan authorities to supervise troop movements. The three posts of Daba, Tsaparang and Rudok were placed under the command of

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58. ORPS : Bk. 113, S. No. 13, pp. 40-41, dated 5-1-1842, J. D. Cunningham from Chooret to G. R. Clerk.

59. *Ibid.*

60. ORPS : Bk. 113, S. No. 14, pp. 42-7, dated 6-1-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

61. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan ; *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, etc. p 391.

62. ORPS : Bk. 86, S. No. 305, p. 187, letter No. 15, dated 11-1-1842, G. R. Clerk, Agent N. W. F. to Lt. J. D. Cunningham.

General Pi hsi and others. All the Tibetan Troops were despatched to various places to search for and attack the Dogras who had established posts all along the route through which the Tibetans attacked.<sup>63</sup> Except for pockets of resistance here and there along the line of fortified posts the Dogra invasion of Garo district was at an end. A large Tibetan Army had gone into action with orders to seek out all fugitives and exterminate them. By the end of March the Tibetans had recaptured all the forts and military posts and the last of the invaders driven out of Tibet.<sup>64</sup> The pickets of Taklakot, Gortok, Rudok, Daba, Tholing and Tsaparang had been reoccupied by the Lhasa troops. The Dogra invasion of Tibet proved futile. Zorawar's endeavours to make Gulab Singh a Central Asian power ended in disaster. The Sikh power of Lahore could not march with Nepal behind the Himalayas.

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63. Meng Pao : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-shu, English Translation, *Himalayan Battleground*, Appendix, p. 168.

64. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback : in *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 53.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

# *Sino—Dogra Contest over Ladakh and the Peace Settlement*

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### **Tibetans Foment Revolt in Ladakh**

Elated by the capture of Chi-t'ang Fort and the destruction of Dogra military posts of Gardok, Rudok, Daba, Tsaparang and other places, the Tibetans began conceiving bold designs of conquests.

As early as the first week of February, 1842, it was rumoured that the Chinese would advance on Ladakh. An advance party of the Chinese had occupied Garo and a detachment of 300 men was on its way to Rohluk (Rudok) by the north bank of the Indus.<sup>1</sup> The villagers of Chooret had slaughtered the Sikh (Dogra) Garrison "under instructions from the Chinese Commander notwithstanding Cunningham's efforts to prevent it."<sup>2</sup> There was a wide spread commotion at military concentrations and district headquarters for invasion and occupation of Ladakh.

Among the prisoners taken by the Tibetans during their battle with Zorawar Singh had been Gon-po (Mgon-po), the steward of the powerful Hemis Monastery near Leh. Zorawar Singh's death had aroused in him the hope of freeing Ladakh from the Dogra rule. The Chinese made use of him to foment revolt in Leh. He sent a secret information to Ladakh that "The Wazir (Zorawar Singh) is dead, and the Tibetan Army is reported in pursuit. Therefore, Upper and Lower Ladakh should be made ready for War."<sup>4</sup> He sent another letter to the British asking for aid in establishing an independent Ladakh. The British replied that

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1. ORPS : 113/7, pp. 53-58, Letter No. 16, dated 2-2-1842. J. D. Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

2. ORPS : 113/8 pp. 59-65, Letter No. 17, dated 12-2-1842 ; J. D. Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

3. Francke, A. H. : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Pt. II,—Arch. Surv. of India, Vol. I. Calcutta, 1936.*

4. *Secret Consultations* ; July 6, 1842, Nos. 40-44 ; Gonbo to Cunningham, April 18, 1842, Cunningham to Gonbo, May 3, 1842.

although they desired peace in Ladakh yet they were unable to do anything since the Sikh were also friends.<sup>5</sup> But before this reply had been written, the Tibetan Kahlons (Ministers) had been busy. The servant of Gon-po furnished to J. D. Cunningham the information of the circumstances under which his master, Gambo, joined the Chinese and was proceeding to Ladakh.<sup>6</sup>

Zorawar's death thus let loose the disgruntled elements in Ladakh. The ex-ruler of Ladakh and the Gon-po, his minister, joined the Tibetan and staged a revolt in Ladakh and seized the Dogra Garrison there.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the ex-ruler of Ladakh sent a petition on behalf of the people of Ladakh to the king of Lahore complaining against the Dogra Rajas, which the British Agent declined to forward.<sup>8</sup> He also appealed to the Emperor of China for help.<sup>9</sup> The frantic appeals and petitions of the king and people of Ladakh fructified in the resolution of the Lhasa authorities to expel the Sikhs (Dogras) from Ladakh. The Nepalese also offered help in this affair which was, however, refused by the Chinese Commander.<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese not only engineering revolts and unrest in Ladakh but they also meant to invade Ladakh in concert with the rebels. A detachment of 400 Chinese were despatched towards Leh, but when hearing that a small-pox had broken out in that city, the party had halted at Nimamut, about 8 marches east of the place. Another Tibetan detachment from Garo was reported to be marching to occupy Spiti, which sent an ultimatum

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5. ORPS : 113/30, pp. 67-8, Letter No. 19, dated 13-3-1842, Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

6. *Secret Consultations*, 30 March 1842, No. 101, Cunningham to Clerk, 2 February 1842 ; *Foreign Secret*, 30 March 1842, Nos. 79-80, Clerk to Maddock, 7 March 1842 ; *Foreign Secret*, 31 August 1842, No. 11, Cunningham to Clerk, 13 March 1842.

7. *Foreign Secret*, 30 August 1842, No. 29, Raja of Ladakh to Raja of Lahore, 27 May, 1842 ; ORPS : 113/32, pp. 110-20, Letter No. 31 dated June 13, 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

8. Fisher, Rose and Huttenback : *Himalayan Battlegrounds* p. 54. A delicately worded petition from the Ladakh "aborigines" and the Balti Khan and his people asking to be allowed to "pledge allegiance to the Emperor by the Chinese Resident ... The advantage to trade and to increased security of the borders was restored, and it was also suggested that if this request was rejected "at some later date they might result and another of our enemies would be strengthened." (Appendix, p. 169).

9. ORPS : 113/28, pp. 98-102, Letter No. 27, dated 20-5-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

10. ORPS : 113/21, p. 69, letter No. 20, dated 1-4-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

that if the Spiti Authorities did not tender their submission a small force would proceed to occupy the valley as soon as the road was open.<sup>11</sup> During the month of May, Tibetan troops Tpeeded up their movements for the occupation of Ladakh. In the third week 800 men from Lhasa arrived at Garo and other Troops were also expected to reach that place.<sup>12</sup> Their preparation for carrying on war with the Sikhs,<sup>13</sup> were reported on all sides and in the heat of the moment confusing accounts were circulated, that the Ladakhis had captured the fort of Leh, making the Chief men prisoners, and that a Sikh Army had arrived within a few day's march of that place.<sup>14</sup> A week later it was rumoured that the Ladakhis had battered down a tower of the fort of Leh, but had not taken.<sup>15</sup>

The clouds of a decisive war between the Jammu Rajas and the Chinese loomed large on the northern frontier. It was believed that the Chinese advance on Ladakh was bound to be defended by Gulab Singh and in order to prevent any violation of their frontier Lieutenant J. D. Cunningham suggested to his government stationing of a small force on the boundary line during summer month.

Mr. G. R. Clerk thought that the presence of the Sirmur battalion on the frontier would be indispensable.<sup>16</sup> Reports from Garo and Ladakh revealed that large reinforcements would soon reach the former place from Lhasa, and that the Dogras still held out against the Tibetans.<sup>17</sup>

In Ladakh, the revolt became wide-spread and preparations for liberation of the land from the Dogra dominance were set up on large scale. Acho-Gonbo (Gan-po), who used to go to Lhasa annually as ambassador (Iop-Chhak), and was well acquainted with the people there, contrived with the chief of Lhasa Armies, Pi-hsi, to drive Dogra Armies

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11. ORPS : 113/28, pp. 93-102, Letter No. 27, dated 20-5-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

12. ORPS : 113/24, pp. 78-80, Letter No. 23, dated 2-5-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

13. *Ibid.*

14. ORPS : 113/30, pp. 107-8, Letter No. 29, dated 28 May 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

15. ORPS : 153/113, pp. 283-87, Letter No. 239, dated 17 May 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

16. ORPS : 113/27, pp. 96-7, Letter No. 26, dated 19 May 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

17. ORPS : 113/8, pp. 59-65, No. 17 of 12-2-1842, J. D. Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

out of Ladakh and to revive the rule of Gyalpo there. Immediately after the message, the Gon-po himself arrived in Ladakh, followed by about 3,000 Lhasa men from the Garo province under the Lhasa Chief, probably in the beginning of April 1842, i.e. ; in the month of Chet 1898 or Bisakh 1899 Bikrami.<sup>18</sup> Gonpo-Tsewang Raftan was deputed to collect soldiers from Sha'm (the Lower Ladakh). The Gon-po himself raised an army from the upper Ladakh and arrived at Leh at the head of the Lhasa forces. Meanwhile the army of Sha'm also reached Leh. During the night this army entered Gyalpo's palace in Leh, and they declared Tandoff-Nana-gyal's grandson, Jigsmat-Namgyal (who had been recognised as titular gyalpo by Wazir Zorawar Singh in place of his grandfather) as an independent Gyalpo. All the weapons found in Tang-mogong and Leh palace, were distributed among the soldiers. Those soldiers who did not get a weapon were given a wooden lance. After these arrangements had been made the rule of Jigsmat-Namgyal was formally instituted in Ladakh.<sup>19</sup>

Now from all parts of the country, even from Baltistan, matchlockmen arrived, and blockaded the two forts in the neighbourhood of Leh to which Dogra Forces had betaken itself.<sup>20</sup> The number of the Dogra Garrison, according to Francke was about 350 men.<sup>21</sup> The Ladakhi Chronicle Records 50 Dogras under Magna Thanahdar in the 'Kila' fort, and 300 men under Kumedan in the 'Chahon' (Changhan). The number of Ladakhi warriors who acknowledged the boy-king Jigsmat-Namgyal, as their only sovereign, was 2,500, according to the Chronicle. Also the detachments of the Central Tibetan Army arrived at Leh, to assist the Ladakhis in their struggle for liberty. The principal of these Tibetans was Pi-hsi, the head of the bowmen, who lived in grand style at the Leh Palace.<sup>22</sup>

The Ladakhi chronicle states that the Steward mGon-po and noblemen of Sam (Sham, i.e. Lower Ladakh) held a consultation. During winter they equipped the army, and in spring they sent the hosts from Upper and Lower Ladakh, Sbalti, Khapulu and Ldum-ra, to Leh. A Tibetan captain of the archers, 100 cavalry, and 500 infantry were posted at Lce-hbre. The Ladakhi Army besieged both the forts and

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18. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan, Maulvi : *Tarikh-i-Jammu-w-Fattuhah Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur* (Urdu) 1937, pp. 394-5.

19. *Ibid.*

20. ORPS : 113/19, p. 66, Letter No. 13, dated 4 March 1842.

21. Francke, A. H. : *A History of the Western Tibet*, p. 165.

22. *Ibid.*

stopped supplying provisions to the Dogra Garrison. So Zorawar Singh's quarter-master at Leh held council with the Kumedan and Magna Thanadar and they concluded that "it looks like a rebellion." They at once sent a petition to Jammu for reinforcement.<sup>23</sup>

#### The Dogra Resistance In Leh.

Commandant Pehlwan Singh, Munshi Guranditta, and the Fatteh Platoon under Subedar Tegh Singh, who had left Ladakh to reinforce Wazir Zorawar Singh, had retreated in the midst of march, on hearing of the To-Yo disaster. On reaching Leh they sought to fortify the contonment of that place.<sup>24</sup> This Dogra Force was divided into two Regiments- the one under Magna Thanadar occupied the fort. The remaining force was under commandant Pehlwan Singh which halted in Karzu-bagh.<sup>25</sup> The latter place was not fortified. When the commandant saw enemy gathering in large number in the Gyalpo's palace, he realised the gravity of the situation, so he moved his unit to a spot opposite the fort.<sup>26</sup> But as there was no more accommodation inside the fort, he had to take shelter in the large stables of the Raja of Ladakh, and he engaged himself in strengthening that place.<sup>27</sup> The total strength of Dogra Soldiers in Ladakh was about 300 men.<sup>28</sup>

The rebels started harassing them from all sides and in co-operation with the Lhasa Army they surrounded the contonment and stables and the fort, and sought to cut off the three places from one another. But the besiegers failed to isolate them. A desultory warfare continued for several days. At last the rebels decided on a night attack so as to annihilate the Dogra Garrison in the contonment and the fort.

Luckily for the Dogras, the Ladakhis wasted most of the night in dispute and planning, and carried out their attack only when the dawn was drawing near. The Dogra Force inside the fort and the contonment offered tough resistance and the battle continued till morning.<sup>29</sup> When it

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23. Francke, A. H. : *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Pt. II, Arch. Surv. of India, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1926, p. 135.*

24. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah, p. 251.*

25. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan, Maulvi : *Tarikh-i-Jammu-w-Fattuhat Maharaja Gulab Singh Bahadur, p. 394.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan, Maulvi : *Tarikh-i-Jammu, etc. p. 394.*

28. Francke, A. H. : *A History of Western Tibet, p. 165.*

29. This account has been taken from the *Tarikh-i-Jammu, etc., (Urdu) by Hashmat-Ullah-Khan, pp. 394-95.*

was day light both Thanadar Magna and commandant Pehalwan Singh carried on sallies and fell boldly upon the enemy from two sides. In hand to hand fight a large number of Ladakhis were killed. At last they lost ground and started running. The Dogras pursued them upto the town and slaughtered several of the fugitives. It is said that in this battle Ladakhis and Tibetans were killed in thousands, so they lost courage and could not recover their strength for some time and even gave up the siege.<sup>30</sup> The Dogra force in Leh held out for 6 months by which time reinforcements had arrived.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps discouraged by these reverses the Ladakhis tried to win intervention of the British and the king of Lahore. The ministers of Ladakhi King wrote to the British that they had given the country to the Chinese Emperor, "we had no other remedy-what could we do."<sup>32</sup> In the middle of June a letter went to Maharaja Sher Singh of Lahore in the name of the King of Ladakh saying that Ladakhis had always had relations with China through Lhasa until the Dogras had interfered. Now the Dogras must leave Ladakh as the Tibetans demanded it, along with the usual tribute to Lhasa, and the recognition of the Chinese supremacy. If Gulab Singh would cooperate, the letter went on, shawls wool, and tea would once again pass through Ladakh and Kashmir to Lahore,<sup>33</sup> but presumably "cooperation" or intervention was not forthcoming.

#### **Other Rallying Centres for Rebels**

In Purig also the situation was not much different from that of Ladakh because the insurrection in whole of the frontier was conceived on a comprehensive and well thought out plan. The Kahlon of Malbe captured all the Dogra Soldiers in the Malbe Fort and threw them over the bridge into the Dagma Nullah. The Raja of Sout also put to sword the Dogra Garrison of Parri Khar, Chhobar-Kher and outer posts. The same was repeated at Suru-Kartse. The Raja of Pashkum also imprisoned the Dogra Garrison of Pashkum Fort. But he did not join the rebels with full zeal with the result that the rebel government in Ladakh sent

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30. *Ibid.*

31. Kirpa Ram, *Gulabnamah*, p. 252.

32. *Secret Consultations*, 3 August 1842, No. 22 ; Gyalpo to Cunningham, 27 May 1842.

33. *Secret Consultations*, August 3, 1842, Gyalpo to Sher Singh, 13 June 1842,

for him and he was allowed to return after due warning. In spite of the best efforts on the part of rebels, Dras remained peaceful.

In Baltistan, however, rebellion broke out in full force. Raja Ahmad Shah had fallen into Tibetan hands. He at once joined their cause and sought to annihilate Dogras. He sent his special agent, Yostar-dang-karim to Iskardu in order to induce Haider Khan of Shigar and Kazim Beg of Iskardu to turn against the Dogras. These persons fomented rebellion in Baltistan so that in due course Ali Khan, Raja of Rondu, Daullat Khan Raja of Khalpu, Khuram Khan Raja of Kurrus and other chiefs were won over to that cause. Afterwards they imprisoned Bhagwan Singh Thanadar of Iskardu along with his men and sacked the government treasury and toshakhaua. Haider Khan sent those prisoners to Nihali and put them under a strong guard. Then he caught Sulaiman Khan Raja of Shigar and occupied Shigar. As Raja Muhammad Shah of Iskardu did not join the rebellion, he was also made prisoner and interned in the Kwardu Monastery, Haider Khan then occupied Khar-pochhe Fort and proclaimed his rule in Iskardu also. Consequently, no vestige of Dogra Rule was suffered to exist in Baltistan. Haider Khan produced reinforcements from Nagar as well whence Wazir Shuja's joined Haider Khan with 140 warriors. Thus almost all the frontier conquests of Zorawar Singh were lost after his death.<sup>34</sup>

### **Gulab Singh's Anxiety on Ladakh Affairs**

The news of Tibetan disaster and Ladakhi revolts came to Raja Gulab Singh as a bolt from the blue. He was overtaken by a great calamity at the juncture when he was expected to assist the English Armies in their Kabul expedition. These evil tidings slowly made their way across the Himalayas by Almora to British India, and reached Raja Gulab Singh at Peshawar by the end of January.<sup>35</sup> Basti Ram was reported to have escaped to Askot<sup>36</sup> by 9 January. The Raja was then at Barakot<sup>37</sup> in Hazara, on his way to Peshawar. On his arrival at

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34. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan : *Tarikh-i-Jammu-w-Futuh-at-i-Maharaja Gulab Singh* (Urdu), pp 393-6.

35. Edwardes, the biographer of Lawrence, says that these evil tidings "reached Rajah Goolab Singh at Peshawar in the middle of February" (*Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, p. 226). Which is not correct. The rumour of this disaster had reached Gulab Singh by the last week of January and his anxiety over the whole affair has been recorded in a letter of Lawrence, dated 31.1.1842, *Press Lists*, Vol VIII., No. 418/28. H. M. Lawrence to Clerk, dated 31.1.1842.

36. ORPS : 55/3, p. 12, dated 12.1.1842, J. H. Batten to T. C. Robertson.

37. Hashmat-Ullah-Khan : *Tarikh-i-Jammu, etc.* p. 397.

Almora, Basti Ram had written an 'arzi', sealed with his own seal, describing what had occurred to him and Zorawar Singh, and the same was forwarded through Mr. Lushington, the British Commissioner of Kumaon,<sup>38</sup> on the 16th January. Basti Ram's letter did not reach Gulab Singh's hands till the middle of February, though rumours had travelled much earlier, and he wrote a parawana 'in which he asks for information as to whether Zorawar Singh is dead or alive', which was forwarded for Almora on 31 January.<sup>39</sup>

Basti Ram's letter reached Gulab Singh probably on 15th Feb. He was reported to be much disconcerted at the news of the fate of Zorawar Singh.<sup>40</sup> He sent Diwan Jawala Sahai to Capt. Mackeson who communicated to him and General Pallock the contents of Basti Ram's letter from Almora detailing the 'suicide' of Zorawar Singh<sup>41</sup> and the destruction of his army and requested that the news might be kept quiet and not made public as it would create a commotion in the army at Peshawar,<sup>42</sup> "as, if known in his camp at Peshawar, it would probably cause a disturbance among the many friends and relations of those who had perished."<sup>43</sup> He was much affected at the disaster, as it might perhaps cause him the loss of all his possessions north of the Himalaya, and his thoughts were now "bent towards Cashmere, there to collect a force with which, as soon as the season admits, to march on Ladak."<sup>44</sup> Gulab Singh's constant endeavour had been "how upon the nucleus and foundation of the Jummoo Chiefship, to build up for himself a hill sovereignty on the southern and northern slopes of the Himalaya. In prosecution of this policy...he had, during 1840 and 1841, annexed Iskardu,

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38. ORPS : 55/17, p. 36, dated 16.1.1842. Lushington to G. R. Clerk.

39. *Press Lists. Vol. VIII*, [p. 829, D. O. No. 41B/28 of 31.1.1842, Capt. H. M. Lawrence, Asstt. Agent, Governor-General, Peshawar, addressing G. R. Clerk.

40. ORPS : 41B/45, D.O. dated 16-2-1842, Capt. H M. Lawrence to G. R. Clerk. The author of *Gulabnamah* says that Gulab Singh got this news in the beginning of the month of Phagan, 1898, which corresponds to about 14/15 Feb. 1842. (*Gulabnamah*, p. 252). This refers to the receipt of Basti Ram's letter by Gulab Singh.

41. See also Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir H. M. Lawrence*, p. 225, "The Jummoo General, Vazeer Zorauvur Singh, killed himself rather than fall alive into the hands of the Chinese."

42. ORPS : 41/42, p. 33, dated 17-2-1842, Lawrence to G. R. Clerk, 41B/45A, dated 17-2-1842, Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

43. Edwardes and Merivale, *Life of Sir H. M. Lawrence*, p. 226.

44. *Ibid.* Also 41B/45A, of 17-2-1842, H. M. Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.



made Gilgit tributary, opened squabbles with Yarkand, seized Garoo, in Chinese Tibet and made the frontier of Jummoo conterminous with that of the Goorkhas in Nepal, no great friends of the British Empire in India."<sup>45</sup> But, in the depth of winter, the hardy Tibetans, seizing their opportunity, surrounded the Jummoo invaders, and having reduced them to a demoralised rebble by starvation and exposure in the snow, massacred them, as the Afghans, almost at the same moment, massacred the British Army in the Kabul passes.<sup>46</sup> The ultimate aim of Gulab Singh was to establish a hill sovereignty, but the Tibetan disaster crushed his dearest hopes, and the reverses his army had sustained, occupied the whole of his attention with the result that the British could expect no assistance from the Sikh Commander (Gulab Singh) in their operations in the Khaiber Pass.<sup>47</sup> Gulab Singh was hence anxious to get away from Peshawar and repair to Ladakh against which the Chinese are advancing.<sup>48</sup>

But before embarking on the reconquest of Ladakh and its dependencies, Gulab Singh wanted to ascertain the feelings of the British Government on this measure,<sup>49</sup> and also to make proper arrangements for safeguarding British interests in the west of the Indus. Diwan Jawala Sahai corroborated the Raja's sentiments when he stated to Captain H. M. Lawrence that Zorawar Singh had gone beyond his resources without reaping any adequate return and that he was ignorant of the nature of the Raja's views beyond Ladakh.<sup>50</sup>

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45. Edwardes and Marivale, *Life of Sir H. M. Lawrence*, pp. 225-26.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 226. Gardner has described the simultaneous revelation of the tidings of these two incidents in the following words :—"Lawrence had got some valuable news from down country, and he was well aware that Gulab Singh's direct news from Kabul would be of the greatest interest to the British. He jocularly offered to swap news. Gulab Singh laughed and agreed. "Give and take", said he; "Let it be fair barter : you tell the truth, and so will I."

The bargain was struck and Lawrence led off by telling Gulab Singh that his expedition to Tibet had utterly failed, and that his agent, Wazir Zorawar Singh, with 9000 soldiers, had been cut off nearly to a man. "I also have some news," said Gulab Singh in his turn, and then told Lawrence the horrid truth that all was over with the British at Kabul, and that Akbar Khan was pressing Jalalabad with terrific vigour. Lawrence, shocked at the intelligence, demanded proofs, when the two retired once more to a private conference, and Gulab Singh showed him the letter he had received. Hugh Pearse : *Memories of Alexander Gardner*, 1898, p. 244.

47. ORPS : 41B/45A, dated 17.2.1842, H. M. Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

48. ORPS : 41/42, p. 33, dated 17.2.1842, H. M. Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

49. ORPS : 41B/45A, dated 17.2.1842, H. M. Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

50. *Ibid.*

The British authorities were very much willing to respect the Raja's sentiments because they were equally in need of his help in their operations across the Khaiber Pass, particularly when the Sikh Forces could not be relied upon in view of their non-cooperating attitude. Although they had not responded favourably to the proposition of the Darbar for the cooperation of the two governments against the Chinese on the Lhasa Frontier,<sup>51</sup> yet they made it very clear that the British Government "cannot reasonably offer any obstacles to the Rajas' in the maintenance of their authority at Ladakh, while it desires their cordial cooperation at Peshawar. The defence of Ladakh by the Jammu Rajas against the Chinese or Tibetan authorities, is, however, in his Lordship's opinion a legitimate measure and he would wish the Rajas every success".

The British officials reciprocated Gulab Singh's anxiety for their trans-Indus interests. They were also alive to "Opinion of those best acquainted with position of the Jammu Rajas that only the immediate presence of Raja Gulab Singh can prevent the Chinese from advancing and conquering Ladakh and threatening Kashmir."<sup>52</sup>

After ascertaining that the British Government was favourably disposed to his interests in Ladakh, Gulab Singh was now desirous to get away from Peshawar and repair to Ladakh against which the Chinese were advancing. But the British authorities at Peshawar were apprehensive that "it will have a bad effect if the Commander-in-Chief of the

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51. ORPS : 153/11, pp. 24-31, dated 15-1-1842, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

There had been several moves on the part of the Darbar and the Dogra Rajas to implicate the British Government in some form in their forward policy in Tibet. Even as early as the middle of October 1841, Rai Kishan Chand, the Darbar Agent at Mr. Clerk's Office, had suggested that the British and Sikh Governments should cooperate against the Chinese, but Mr. Clerk discouraged the proposition. —ORPS : VII, 152/55, dated 20.10.1841, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock. A month later Raja Dhian Singh had also proposed that, were an invasion (of Tibet) to be undertaken in great force on this frontier of China in concert with the British Government, it would be very beneficial to both the allied Governments —*Punjab Akhbars*, 1839-40, dated 22-11-1841. A similar proposition was received from the Darbar for the cooperation of the two Governments against the Chinese on the Lhasa frontier, on 15-1-1842, (ORPS : 153/11, Clerk to Maddock). As late as June 1842, the Dogra Rajas had repeated their wish for the cooperation of the British towards Tibet. ORPS : 153/102, dated 11-6-1842, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

52. ORPS : 153/31, pp. 73-76, letter No. 77, dated 15-2-1842. G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

Sikh Army leaves us.”<sup>53</sup> Raja Gulab Singh, therefore made satisfactory arrangements to secure the British interests beyond the Indus so that his departure might not be injurious though captain Lawrence still insisted that his departure “would be laid hold of by the Afghans as a sign in their favour.”<sup>54</sup> After Gulab Singh had made adequate arrangements for the Command of the Sikh troops and completed a system of occupation of the Khaibar defile, he was consented to leave Peshawar in the beginning of May 1842 to superintend measures of defence against the advance of Chinese on Ladakh.<sup>55</sup>

### Preparations For The Final Show-Down

Immediately on the receipt of the news of this disaster, Gulab Singh had sent for his commander, Diwan Hari Chand, who was at that time engaged in fighting against Payenda Khan, the rebellions Hakim of Darband on the banks of the Attock river.<sup>56</sup> The Diwan at once entrusted the expedition to the Purbiah Platoon of Maharaja Sher Singh and left for Jammu in compliance to the orders of Gulab Singh. He reached Haripur in the environs of Jammu by forced marches where he was met by Raja Dhian Singh who had also left Lahore for Jammu on the receipt of this tragic information with a view to equip a fresh force for Ladakh.<sup>57</sup> After much urgent exertions Raja Dhian Singh marshalled a powerful army and despatched it to Ladakh under Mian Ratnu in place of Zorawar Singh.<sup>58</sup>

After a week's preparations at Jammu, Diwan Hari Chand left for Kashmir Valley via Mirpur and Uri at the head of 6000 soldiers.<sup>59</sup> The Nazim of Kashmir, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din rendered him every possible help. At Srinagar, Wazir Ratnu took over the supreme command of the Dogra Forces. Everyday about 500 soldiers were

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53. ORPS : 41B/84, dated 13-4-1842, Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

54. ORPS : 41B/85, dated 13-4-1842, Lawrence to G. R. Clerk.

55. ORPS : 158/90, pp. 248-250, Letter No. 206, dated 6-5-1842, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

56. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 252.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

58. ORPS : 153/17, pp. 40-45, Letter No. 39, dated 20-1-1842, which reports that Jammu Rajas are equipping a force to march to Ladakh under Mian Ratnu in place of Zorawar Singh.

59. *Gulabnamah*, p. 253.

despatched towards Ladakh.<sup>60</sup> On the fifteenth day both Wazir Ratnu and Diwan Hari Chand also marched towards Ladakh with the remnants of the armies.

The British Agent, J. D. Cunningham was in touch with the Lhasa authorities, and had written a letter to the Lhasa Wazir, Zoorkung, as early as 12 February, 1842.<sup>61</sup> He reported to his Govt., that both Sikhs and Chinese seem ready to fight for Ladakh.<sup>62</sup> He also asked for instructions how to act in case he was referred to by either party or by both.<sup>63</sup> Both the parties were making full preparation for a show down. The Dogras were waiting for summer season. By the end of April the British Government had received a rumour of the march of some Chinese Troops from Lhasa towards Garo.<sup>64</sup> The Chinese had plans on Ladakh and the Ladakhi King, who had declared his independence of the Dogras, had sent presents to Lhasa<sup>65</sup> as a token of his allegiance to Lhasa authority. The Gon-bo, treasurer of the late Raja of Ladakh, had expressed his wish for British mediation in the dispute between the Chinese and the Sikhs.<sup>66</sup> The British were perhaps uncertain about the outcome of the conflict so that their Political Agent at Peshawar forwarded to G. R. Clerk, a report current in Peshawar that the reinforcements sent to Ladakh, were retreating pursued by the Chinese.<sup>67</sup> But G. R. Clerk was aware of the Dogra Rajas and their power, and was therefore hopeful. In May, he wrote to his Government on the success which might be anticipated for the Jammu Rajas against the Chinese now that Raja Gulab Singh was in command of the force.<sup>68</sup>

Incidentally, this letter reveals that Raja Gulab Singh has been permitted to leave Peshawar in the first week of May 1842, and he was actively engaged in equipping Ladakh force and directing operations on that front by the second week of May.<sup>68a</sup>

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60. *Ibid.*

61. ORPS : 113/22, pp. 70-74, dated 9-4-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

64. ORPS : 113/23, pp. 75-77, dated 28-4-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

65. ORPS : 113/25, pp. 81-86, dated 3-5-1842, Clerk to Cunningham.

66. *Ibid.*

67. ORPS : 41A/107, dated 18-5-1842, Mackeson to Clerk.

68. ORPS : 153/103, pp. 264-65, Letter No. 224, dated 11.5.1842.

68a. On 11th May, it was reported that 'Raja Gulab Singh is in command of the force' so the British Agent wrote of the success 'which may be anticipated for the Jammu Rajas against the Chinese' on that account.

G. R. Clerk also remarked on the propriety of constituting Lt. Cunningham as mediator between the Lhasa and Ladakh authorities, should they inclined to listen the advice from the British Government.<sup>69</sup> By the middle of May the British Governor-General had made up his mind to show some interest in re-establishing peace between the Sikhs and Chinese. He, therefore, conveyed his "no objection" to Lt. Cunningham acting as the mediator to bring about a reconciliation between the Jammu Rajas and the Chinese authorities on the Tibet frontier.<sup>70</sup> But he did not contemplate any armed intervention in the dispute beyond the Himalayas.<sup>71</sup>

But request for mediation which the Governor-General had anticipated did not come, and the Dogra Rajas deemed it more desirable to decide matters themselves. The Lhasa authorities as well as the Dogra Rajas were marshalling their forces for a final show-down over Ladakh. A few hundred Dogra soldiers were still holding out against the Chinese, and the Ladakhi rebels and Lhasa contingent were expecting large reinforcements to reach soon from Lhasa.<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, the petition from the Ladakhi "aboriginals" and the Balti Khan and his people asking to be allowed to "pledge allegiance to the Tibetan Shang-Shang"<sup>73</sup> received assent of the Chinese Emperor on May 31, 1842.<sup>74</sup> According to Nepali representative at Lhasa, 5000 additional Tibetan troops left Lhasa for Ladakh in June.<sup>75</sup> During this month several conflicting reports reached British Agencies. One such report said that the Chinese had retreated from Leh on hearing of the approach of the Sikh (Dogra) reinforcements. Another report said that no reinforcements have arrived.<sup>76</sup> By the end of June nearly all the Chinese troops eastward of Manasarowar Lake had been sent towards Leh. The dispossessed Raja of Iskardu had been reported to be at Tashingong, some 3000 to 3500 troops were reported to be with the

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69. *Ibid.*

70. ORPS : 130/118, p. 280, letter No. 178, dated 19.5.1842, Maddock to Clerk.

71. ORPS : 130/132, p. 293, Letter No. 212, dated 25-5-1842, Maddock to Clerk.

72. ORPS : 113/27, pp. 25-7, Letter No. 27, dated 19-5-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

73. *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 156.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

75. Enclosures..... Vol. 89, 1849 ; *Nepal Political Diary*, Sept. 1, 1842.

76. ORPS : 113/31. p. 109, Letter No. 30, dated 1 June 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

young Raja of Ladakh. No major fighting between the Sikhs and Chinese had taken place so far. The Dogras also were inactive and appeared to be waiting for reinforcements from Kashmir.<sup>77</sup> By the first fortnight of July, preparations on both sides seem to have been completed and Cunningham had at once to flash to his masters the intelligence of the arrival of the Dogras in Leh and of the Chinese four marches east of that place.<sup>78</sup> This condition lasted for about a month,<sup>79</sup> and no Skirmish had taken place to the end of July. During this period the Sikhs (i.e ; Dogra armies) were reported to have built a fort at Leh and reinforcements from Kulu and Spiti had arrived.<sup>80</sup> The Chinese probably tried to avoid an engagement with the Sikhs until the winter set in.<sup>81</sup> But Dogras were now ready for battle.

### **Revolts Crushed.**

While staying at Dras on his way to Ladakh, Diwan Hari Chand had received information from Sucheta thanadar of Kargal to the effect that the Kargal Fort had been invested by the enemy who had raised two towers in the middle of the mountain in order to block the road from the fort to the river. The Diwan sent a force of 3000 men under Ram Singh Jamadar via Kohi for the relief of Kargal.<sup>82</sup> The Diwan and Wazir Ratnu directed their mite on the two towers. Ram Singh Jamadar ascended the mountain from the other side and reached a point above the towers where Bahadur Khan Kargalwala was ready to give battle. Sucheta thanadar also came out of the fort and surrounded the rebels on the third side. A bloody battle raged for about a quarter of the day before the enemy took to a run. About 200 were killed and some 3000 were washed away by the current of the river through which they had tried to escape.

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77. ORPS : 113/33, pp. 121-22, Letter No. 32, dated 29 June 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

78. ORPS : 113/34, pp. 123-30, Letter No. 33, dated 9 July 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

79. ORPS : 113/25, pp. 131-35, Letter No. 34, dated 26 July 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

80. ORPS : 113/38, pp. 149-51, Letter No. 37, dated 5 August 1842, Cunningham to Clerk,

81. *Ibid.*

82. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, pp. 254-5.

The Dogra Army marched the next day to Chhanajung village where they were surprised by Raja Muhammad Ali Khan Pushkumia, whose men fell upon the Dogras.<sup>83</sup> Two Platoons of the Dogras were sent against them. Several of the enemy ran away in fear, but the Raja and some 200 men surrendered only after offering some resistance.

Dogras then marched to Mabah and reached the 'Khalashi' bridged on the Indus which had been pulled down by the enemy who had gathered on the opposite bank. The bridge was laid out in a day and the Dogra Force crossed over to Pushkham. They then advanced in two groups, each under Wazir Ratnu and Diwan Hari Chand, and met at Thasgam, about two miles away from Leh.<sup>84</sup> At the very approach of the Dogra Force the Tibetans under Bakshi Chhak-Jot lifted the siege of Leh cantonment and withdrew some miles away.<sup>85</sup> Next day they joined the garrison of Pehlwant Singh Kumedan, (Commandant); Tegh Singh Subedar and Bakshi Guranditta at Labrang near Ladakh cantonment.<sup>86</sup>

After six day's stay there the Dogra Commander despatched about 1,000 men under Mian Jawahir Singh towards Jaskar, and 500 men under Mian Narainia to Lubrah. The porters and coolies from Kashmir were paid off and sent back. Bakshi Chhak-jot the leader of Ladakhi rebels who had taken shelter in the Rudok Fort, receiving intelligence of march of troops to various directions, considered it opportune to attack the Dogras in Ladakh. He, therefore, deployed thousand men under the command of his brother Acchan jot and Karnsha, brother of Kahlon Ragesha, against the Dogras at Ladakh. They advanced to a place near Gonpa Chamra, some ten krohs or 20 kilometers from Ladakh. Dogras received the intelligence of the movements of Ladakhis through Ragsan-Gonpā, and a contingent under the command of Sardul Singh commandant and Lala Ramji Mal Munshi was despatched against the rebels. The Ladakhis were routed and they took shelter in Gonpah-Chamrah. At this the main force of the Dogras under Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu besieged that place and set up a cannon on the top of a hill and started shelling the fort. The Tibetan Garrison lost heart and sued for quarter after four days. Consequently, Bakshi Nihal Singh went inside gonpah in order to confirm and regulate terms of peace and led the enemy out.

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83. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 255.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

86. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 257.

They alongwith their commanders Achhan-jot and Karnsha, were sent to Ladakh under the guard of Wazir Ratnu. Sardul Singh Commandant and Ramji Mal Munshi were left in charge of that place and the Dogra Force marched back to Ladakh.<sup>87</sup> Raja Gulab Singh had arrived at Kashmir, so the news of this victory was conveyed to him there.

The Tibetan prisoners once again rose against their Dogra guard, killed a few of them and tried to escape. But a contingent from Ladakh arrived in time, caught them all with a few exceptions, and sent them to Kashmir under the guard of 200 men, in the presence of Gulab Singh.<sup>88</sup>

### **The Final Show-Down And the Peace Treaty—August 1842**

After withdrawing from Leh and other strongholds, the Tibetans and their Ladakhi accomplices, under General Pi-hsi, arrived at Drangtse, near the western end of the Pangkong Lake and there they were joined by a Tibetan Army of 5,000<sup>89</sup> men under the command of Ragasha and Zarkang.<sup>90</sup> They dug trenches and erected a fortified camp there in a six days' time.<sup>91</sup> The Dogra accounts raise their number to 6,000 men, led by Bakshi Chhak-jot, Ragasha Kahlon and Raz-Chak Garpon aided by a cannon which they had wrested from Wazir Zorawar Singh.

According to Meng Pao's account the Tibetan defence post was set up at Lung-wu (Klum-gyogma in the Ladakhi chronicles) an area between Rudok and Pangong Lake, a place on the Tibetan frontier.<sup>92</sup> This camp was situated in the lower part of a narrow valley, and the storming of it would have meant a considerable loss to the Dogras.

The Dogra Commander at Leh, Diwan Hari Chand ordered Commandant Sardul Singh and Ramji Mal Munshi to move from Gonpa-Chamrah with their men and confront the enemy, which they did. The Commander himself, leaving behind 100 men for the defence of Leh, marched hurriedly towards Tibetan defences for a final struggle.<sup>93</sup> The

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87. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 258.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

89. 3,000 men according to Francke : *Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 166 ; but 5,000 according to Ladakhi chronicles and Nepali correspondence. See *Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, p. 55.

90. A. H. Francke : *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p. 160.

91. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 260.

92. Meng-Pao's : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu. (Memorial from Meng Pao to the Emperor), October 25, 1842.

93. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 260.



Dogra forces established their first contacts with the enemy probably during the last week of July 1842.

On the very arrival of Dogra Army the Tibetans decided on a night-attack and at mid-night they surrounded the Dogra camp, but were pushed back. Their attempt foiled, the Tibetans were compelled to take shelter in their strongly located cantonment. A desultory battle raged for 8 days without any gain to either side.<sup>94</sup> Probably on the first August, the eighth day of confrontation, the Dogras made a desperate charge on the enemy positions at dawn but they could not penetrate the fortifications<sup>95</sup> and had to withdraw some 20 li to a spot on the great lake,<sup>96</sup> after sustaining a loss of some 300 men (only 120 according to Meng Pao) and one officer Commandant Majja Singh, killed.<sup>97</sup>

After four day's lull in fighting the Dogras planned to eject the Tibetans from their invincible trenches by a stratagem. "They secretly built a large dam at the upper end of the valley in order to flood out our (the Tibetan) camp, which was situated in the lower end of the valley. Our forces were then forced to retreat to a higher, more strategic spot where it was possible to resist them."<sup>98</sup>

In three days of the erection of dam the Tibetan trenches were flooded and had to be deserted. Outside their fortifications the Tibetans were not equal to the well-armed Dogras. As soon as the Tibetans were on the move, the Dogra Commander "Tieh-wa (Diwan, i. e ; Diwan Hari Chand), another Shem-pa (Dogra) Chief, led several waves of the enemy in an attack on our positions," reported Meng-Pao, the Imperial Resident at Lhasa to the Chinese Emperor. "In these battles," he continued, "Jupon-Tun-Chieh-Ch'a-Wang,' and Chiapon-Chi-Pu-Pa, together with one more Chiapon and two Tinga-pons, were lost.<sup>99</sup> Most of the Tibetans, fled pell mell and several were made prisoners. The Dogra loss according to Meng Pao was 230 men and two minor officers killed.<sup>100</sup> And as a result of this battle "they (Dogras) were prevented from crossing the Tibetan Boundary."<sup>101</sup>

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94. *Ibid.*

95. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 261.

96. Meng-Pao's : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Append. to Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, p. 172.

97. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 261. The Ladakhi chronicles name the Officer "Kumidar Maca-Sin."

98. Meng Pao's Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Himalayan Battleground*, p. 172.

99. Meng-Pao's : Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, *Append. in Himalayan Battleground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, p. 172

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid.*

It seems that Dogra Commander combined stratagem with treachery. When Tibetans had been forced to desert their fortifications as a result of flood, the Dogra General probably sent Qazi Nadir Ali and the "Wazir Mutsaddi" to negotiate a truce.<sup>102</sup> The Tibetans, realising their weak position, readily agreed to the proposal. So Chinese officers and men were brought disarmed to the Dogra Camp, and were treacherously seized and made prisoners.

This event has probably been reported by British intelligencer in a letter from Leh, dated 10th August 1842, that the whole of the Sikh (Dogra) force had left Leh and had encamped near the Chinese Army and that negotiations were in progress. Raja Gulab Singh was also expected in Leh shortly.<sup>103</sup> A Dogra Force had also crossed from Kishtwar into the Ladakh districts of Zanskar, the Raja of which place had fled to the Chinese Camp. The Chinese removed the young Raja of Ladakh to Tashigong on the Indus.<sup>104</sup> The later intelligence reports refer to the asserted treacherous seizure by the Sikhs of two persons of rank sent by the Chinese to treat with them.<sup>105</sup> Among the officers so seized there was the Tibetan General Ragasha, who made an unsuccessful bid to escape and got killed in the attempt.<sup>106</sup> Probably he was decapitated to avenge the death of Zorawar Singh on the Tibetans.<sup>107</sup>

After the seizure of the Tibetan officers the Dogra Army fell upon the Tibetans and surrounded them on all sides. The beleaguered army surrendered. Their arms were confiscated and they were allowed to escape. The arms and weapons which fell to enemy hands in the battle with Wazir Zorawar Singh were recovered. Chinese leaders such as Mor-Tan-Chin, Achah-Gonpa and Ahmad Shah, Raja of Iskardu, became captives.<sup>108</sup> After this contest of several days and the ultimate defeat the Chinese Forces retreated towards Tashigong.<sup>109</sup>

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102. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 262.

103. ORPS : 113/41, pp. 158-62, Letter No. 40, dated 28-8-1842 from Cunningham to Clerk, conveying information received from Leh upto the 10th August, 1842.

104. *Ibid.*

105. ORPS : 113/43, pp. 168-92, Letter No. 42, dated Sept. 18, 1842, Cunningham to Clerk ; 113/44, pp. 173-78, Letter No. 43, dated Sept. 24, 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

106. *Gulabnamah*, p. 262.

107. Francke, p. 167.

108. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 262.

109. ORPS : 113/43, pp. 168-92, Letter No. 42, dated Sept. 18, 1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

Official documents of Meng-Pao, the Chinese Emperor's Resident at Lhasa, give the date of this battle as the second day of the 8th month corresponding to September 6, 1842.<sup>110</sup> But the event might have taken place some weeks earlier, probably about 10th August 1842. The reports emanating from various quarters after that date describe the event as a *fait-accomplish*. Thus a letter from Lahore Darbar to their Vakil at Ludhiana dated 15.8.1842, sent to the British Government on 31st August, 1842, directs him to inform Mr. G. R. Clerk, Agent, British Governor-General of the engagements between the Lhasa and the Khalsa Troops in which the former were defeated, many being killed and taken prisoners and "all the old boundaries of Ladakh are now repossessed by the Sikhs."<sup>111</sup> A.D.O. from Peshawar, of 14th August mentions the Sikhs as boasting that their is a peace which gives a real pleasure, as it has been earned by the edge of the sword,<sup>112</sup> making an implied reference to the victory and peace in Ladakh.

On learning of the grim struggle with the Tibetans, Raja Gulab Singh had sent a reinforcement of 4,000 men which stopped in the way on the news of complete victory over the Tibetans.<sup>113</sup> Raja Gulab Singh himself arrived in Leh in the middle of August, most probably on the 12th August. He at once commenced building a fort at the capital, Leh, place of the weak redoubt from which the insurgent in at the instigation of the Chinese had expelled his small party of troops.<sup>114</sup>

He also sent Vakils to the Chinese Leaders<sup>115</sup> to negotiate a treaty of peace and friendship. The representative sent was Re-tang (Wazir Ratnu), a minor officer, and Ah-mich-cho, an interpreter.<sup>116</sup> The Dogra Rajas were probably anticipating negotiations to prolong, so Raja Dhian Singh solicited the mediation of the British Government in the strife between the Sikhs as represented by the Jammu Rajas and the Chinese towards Lhasa and Ladakh.<sup>117</sup> To this request the Governor-General expressed

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110. Meng-Pao's: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Append. to Himalayan Battle-ground* by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, p. 192.

111. ORPS : 155/185, pp. 213-15, dated 15-8-1842.

112. ORPS : 41A/127, dated 14.8.1842, Capt. F. Mackeson to G. R. Clerk.

113. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 263.

114. ORPS ; 154/36, pp. 92-3, Letter No. 349, dated 16.8.1842, Clerk to Maddock.

115. *Ibid.*

116. Meng-Pao's: Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu, in *Append. of Himalayam Battle-ground*, by Fisher, Rose and Huttenback, p. 173.

117. ORPS : 154/45, pp. 108-11, Letter No. 370, dated 31.8.1842, Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

his willingness to afford his good offices for the adjustment of the differences between the Maharaja of Lahore and the Chinese upon any reasonable terms.<sup>118</sup> A settlement, however, was arrived at without British mediation, though the latter had the satisfaction that "the influence of the British Government has brought about this result."<sup>119</sup> The treaty of peace and friendship was signed on Asuj 2, 1899, corresponding to 14th September 1842, the date given in the Persian version of the treaty in the *Gulabnamah*;<sup>120</sup> whereas according to the information received by G. R. Clerk, the British Agent, the peace had been made with the Lhasa authorities on 24th September, 1842.<sup>121</sup> The Lhasa Leaders, the Wazir Zoorking and others, were released after the exchange of treaty documents.<sup>122</sup> The Bhotis, however, did not consider the peace very durable,<sup>123</sup> and the British Agent observes that the present peace can only be regarded as a suspension of hostilities until it is confirmed by the Chinese deputies in Lhasa, or by the Emperor himself.<sup>124</sup>

By this written instrument the Chinese agreed that :..... "as regards the boundary of the country of Ladakh including suburbs, fixed of ancient days, we will at all have no concern and nothing to do. We will export Shawlpushm and tea according to old tradition by way of Ladakh yearly ; and if any one of Sri Maharaja Sahiba bahadur's enemies comes to our quarter and territories, we will not entertain the word of the said enemies, and will give no shelter in our country to the aforesaid men, and whatever traders of Ladakh will come to our territories shall meet no hinderances, and whatever we stipulate in writing on the face of the contract about solidarity and friendship, unity and fixing of the frontiers of Ladakh territory and the keeping open of the road for the traffic in Shawl-Pushm and tea, will not in the least be infringed by us."<sup>125</sup>

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118. ORPS : 131/86, p. 173, Letter No. 772, dated 5-9-1842, Maddock to Clerk.

119. ORPS : 154/65, pp. 151-52, Letter No. 424, dated 21-10-1842, Clerk to Maddock.

120. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, p. 264.

121. ORPS : 113/48, pp. 188-89, Letter No. 47, dated 28-10-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

122. ORPS : 113/46, pp. 183-4, Letter No. 47, dated 28-10-1842, Cunningham to Clerk, 113/49 pp. 190-92, Letter No. 48, dated 1.12.1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

123. ORPS : 113/49, pp. 190-92, Letter No. 48, dated 1.12.1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

124. ORPS : 113/48, pp. 188-89, Letter No. 47, dated 28-10-1842, Cunningham to Clerk.

125. Kirpa Ram : *Gulabnamah*, pp. 264-65.

Thus the annual trade between Lhasa and Leh was reinstated, the Dogras taking the place and obligations of the Ladakhi Kings. Jigmad-Namgyal had to be satisfied with the village of Stog and the taxes of its few peasants, and hardly a single one of the old Ladakhi officials remained in office.<sup>126</sup>

According to the Persian version of the treaty the Tibetans referred to the ancient boundaries of Ladakh and guaranteed that they will in future have no designs on Ladakh, that they will not aid or give shelter to Gulab Singh's enemies, and that they will carry on shawl-wool and tea trade via Leh in accordance with the old customs.

In both the Tibetan and Persian notes the existing situation was recognised. On the part of the Tibetans, the Dogras were recognised as the legitimate authority in Ladakh. Gulab Singh surrendered all claim to West Tibet. The "old established frontiers" were re-affirmed and both the contracting parties agreed to respect them. The Ladakhi King was permitted to reside in Ladakh, so long as he refrained from intrigues against the Dogra rulers. He was granted permission to send annual gifts to Dalai Lama and his ministers, if he so desired.

The British Government raised no objection to the trade arrangement made by the treaty—"that Ngari Pushm will flow to Ladakh, and not to Bushahr". British Government silently acquiesced in this settlement which shows their real interests involved in the affair were political and not commercial.

A parwana<sup>127</sup> from the Lahore Darbar to Rai Kishan Chand, directed him to inform Mr. G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor-General, N. W. F., of the latest position in Ladakh till middle of August 1842. It contained the information of the engagements between the Lhasa and the Khalsa Troops in which the former were defeated, many being killed and taken prisoners. Consequently, "all the old boundaries of Ladakh are now repossessed by the Sikhs and there is no occasion for Lieut. Cunningham to remain on Bushahr frontier unless he can adjust matters in accordance with the terms dictated by the Darbar.

### **Suppression of Rebellion in Baltistan, Purig and Zanskar**

The inhabitants of Baltistan had also rebelled. Sulaiman Khan, Raja of Shigar and Muhammad Shah, the ruler of Iskardu were in prison and Kachu Haider Khan was reigning in Shigar and Iskardu. The Dogra

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126. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 167.

127. ORPS : 155/185, pp. 213-15, dated 15-8-1842.

officers and soldiers deputed in these lands had been isolated and surrounded and Dogra rule in Baltistan had come to an end. Gulab Singh had, therefore, deputed his agent Wazir Lakhpat Kashtwaria for the suppression of revolts there.

Wazir Lakhpat left Kashtwar for Baltistan at the head of about 3,000 Dogra soldiers with the object of stamping out sedition. He entered that region through the Chelong-Suru stream. He met resistance all through his advance but the Wazir pressed onwards and reached Kargil. Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu had already curbed the rebels in the Tek-tek-mu battle and had left for Ladakh. Wazir Lakhpat, therefore, set the internal administration in order and set up preparations for advance on Baltistan in consultation with Raja Ali Sher Khan, ruler of Kar-takhsha.

The Wazir crossed the river Dras at the Karkat bridge and came on Shanghu-Sighar where the Iskardu rulers had built a tower and set up a garrison which offered some resistance but being outnumbered all of them were made prisoners. From thence the Wazir led his army on the upper part of the Dev-sai plain and then went down the Kafchun Stream. The Wazir's raid was so cautious and rapid that he took the rebels there by surprise.

When Kachu Haidar Khan got the intelligence of the arrival of the army in Kaf-Chun, he gave up the idea of battle and shut himself up in Kharpuche Fort. The Wazir reached Iskardu and set siege to the fort. This fort was perched on a lofty hill and was difficult of access, so it was considered to be invincible. The siege continued for several days but the Wazir's strategy did not work. Thereupon with the help of Raja Ali Sher Khan and Raja Muhammad Shah, he won over Wazir Muhammad Ali Chh-Khat-pa, the Commander of the unit guarding the gate of the fort who agreed to throw open the gate at night. The tower on the Neuranga hill guarding the high road to the fort, was also under Wazir Muhammad Ali, who also assured that men posted there will not resist the Dogra soldiers.

During the night the Wazir sent a unit on the top of the Neuranga hill. He himself led the remaining army against the gate of the fort. As the gate was kept open so Dogra soldiers got into the fort and caused much bloodshed. The garrison was taken by surprise and it ran pell-mell, some of them escaped through land whereas others swam across the Indus river. Many of them were drowned in the river. In short, the

garrison was completely annihilated and the fort was captured by the Dogra Army by morning.

Now Kachu Haidar Khan, realised the futility of resistance and planned to escape to safety with his companions. They left the fort by the north gate and ran to Shigar. There he made proper arrangements and left with his companions for Yarkand via Thale-Wasalaturu Nullah. But Raja Daulat Ali Khan got wind of their movements, sent his men, captured them and brought them back to Khaplu. Thence he himself carried them before Wazir Lakhpat. The Wazir properly rewarded the services of Daulat Ali Khan, Raja of Khaplu. He imprisoned Haider Khan and his 80 companions. Haider Khan was later on carried to Jammu where he died.

The Wazir Lakhpat set fire to Khar-pochhe, the shelter of rebels and razed it to ground except a small mosque inside the fort which was left in tact. The fort was thus rendered unserviceable. The small cells there were repaired to serve as ammunition stores. Wazir Zorawar Singh had laid the foundation of a new fort on the top of a hill to the right bank of Sat-par nullah. Wazir Lakhpat completed that fort during his stay in Iskardu and appointed Bhagwan Singh who had been released from his Niali confinement, as the commander of the new fort with a garrison of 300 men. For the maintenance of this garrison he levied, in addition to Raja's cesses, some new cesses in kind in the form of certain quantities of wheat, butter, salt and fodder which were to be collected by the Raja of Iskardu and handed over to the garrison. No nazarana or revenue was to be charged from the people.

Muhammad Shah was confirmed in his Rajaship of Iskardu and his powers and prerogatives were not interfered with. Daulat Ali Khan and Khurram Khan were confirmed as Rajas of Khaplu and Kurrus respectively and their Jagirs were continued as before. Raja Ali Sher Khan had won favour by his good services and was, therefore maintained in his jagir of Kar-takhsha uninterfered. Similarly Ahmad Khan, Raja of Tolti was also maintained in his office.

After settling affairs in Iskardu Wazir Lakhpat left for Shigar. The ruler thereof, Sulaiman Khan, had died. So he made his son Iman Quli Khan, the Raja and restored all his Jagirs and left some army to guard that place. Now the Wazir advanced towards Rondu in order to stamp out sedition there. He attacked Rondu by way of the Bishu forest, and the place was carried after a little resistance. But in this battle the Wazir of Raja Muhammad Shah, Doghoni-pa-Bono, who was a faithful servant of the Raja and guide of Wazir Lakhpat, was killed. Ali Khan, Raja of

Rondu was though maintained in his office, yet his son Hussain Khan was carried as host and a garrison was left behind to guard the Astak Fort.

Astor had also rebelled. The Wazir, therefore, led his army on that place via Har-pola, Jabbar Khan, the Raja, shut himself up in the fort and the Wazir set seige to it. Soon the beseized fell short of provisions and the Raja was forced to surrender. He submitted and was maintained in his office.

After these successes the Wazir returned to Iskardu, and setting law and order in these disturbed quarters he left for Jammu via Kashtwar, taking along with him the war-prisoners of Baltistan. At Purig he caught all the Rajas of that region and others who had participated in rebellion, viz ; Hussain Khan Raja of Pushkam ; Salam Khan Raja of Sant ; Rahim Khan Raja of Takcha ; Sewan Namgyal, Kahlon of Mal-be ; Chugdar-Namgyal, Raja of Timbus—and carried them all to Jammu. He also sentenced to death some of the men of Baltistan and Purig who had taken active part in the rebellion and hung their heads at prominent places as a warning to others. He set up garrisons in the forts of Kargil, Dras, and Suru for the defence of Purig. In short, Wazir Lakhpat's expedition met with a singular success and the administration he set up in Baltistan and Purig became the foundation for future government.

Zanskar had also rose in revolt at the news of Zorawar's death. The rebel leader Che-moor Gyalpo had put to death the thanadar, Jamadar Deenu appointed there by Wazir Zorawar Singh, and all the Dogra Garrison, and had uprooted the Dogra rule in that district. He had sent his son and heir, Balchun, to Ladakh to convey his congratulations on the successful revolt. At the very arrival of Wazir Lakhpat, the people hurried to tender submission which he accepted without reserve. But he captured the Gyalpo Che-moor and his family, confiscated his property and carried them to Jammu as prisoners. The Wazir appointed Mehta Basti Ram the thanadar of Zanskar and put some soldiers under him. He also built a new fort there. In short, he made proper civil and military arrangements in the regions reconquered by him and the last haunt of the rebels was thus demolished and the Dogra supremacy was again restored over all the territories conquered by Wazir Zorawar Singh between 1834 and 1840.



## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Shadow of Politics over Arms*

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#### **British Anxiety on Zorawar Singh's Trans-Himalayan Conquests**

Gulabnama, the Persian biography of Maharaja Gulab Singh does not make any mention of the interference exercised by the English in Gulab Singh's Balti-Tibetan forward move. When his General, Wazir Zorawar Singh conquered Ladakh and Baltistan during 1834 and 1840, the British found no excuse to intervene, nor were these conquests considered by them in any way injurious to British interests. Surprisingly, it was the Sikh Governor of Kashmir who found in this event a pretext to complain that Gulab Singh's commercial regulations interfered with the regular supply of shawl wool; and 'the grasping ambition of the favourites caused Ranjit Singh some misgivings amidst all their protestations of devotion and loyalty.'<sup>1</sup> The Dogra expeditions into Ladakh made even Prince Kharak Singh particularly apprehensive of the designs of the Jammu Family.<sup>2</sup> But the British had not felt as much concerned with the Dogra Conquests of the Ladakhi and Balti Territories, in spite of the fact that the Gyalpos of these territories had offered to tender their allegiance and sought British protection. But the representations of the chiefs of these countries remained unheeded. Only once, when the Balti Chief sent two of his sons with the written lament—"I long ago put myself under the only asylum, the British protection and considered myself among the dependents",<sup>3</sup> that the British Government contemplated interceding on behalf of the Balti Ruler, and to remonstrate "in friendly language" with the Lahore Darbar.<sup>4</sup> But then again it thought it better to stick to its previous policy of non-interference and the British

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1. Wade to Government, 27th Jan., 1835; Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir and Tibet*, ii. 352.

2. Wade to Government, 10th August, 1836.

3. G. R. Clerk, Political Agent, Ludhiana to Government, 31-5-1840, *Pol. Consul. For. Dept.* : 1-3-1841, No. 127, Enclosure No. 1.

4. Mackeson to G. R. Clerk, 18-7-1840, *Pol. Consul. For. Dept.*, 1-3-1841, No. 126.

Governor-General instructed G. R. Clerk that there can be no reason for interference on the part of his Government.”<sup>5</sup>

This, however, does not imply that the British Government had in any way approved of the Dogra Conquest of the Himalayan principalities. On the other hand they had not at all relished these ‘encroachments’ of the Dogras, resentment against which they had liked to express as early as 1838, to show “both to the Maharaja and his vassals, the Dogra Brothers, that we are not insensible to that system of wanton encroachment on their neighbours which has produced on the Indus, a state of tumult and disorder which threatens to introduce on the banks of that river a combination of new influences perhaps to the peace of our Government than that of the Maharaja.”<sup>6</sup>

On the question of Yarkand, they could not remain passive as Anglo Chinese-negotiations over the first Opium War were taking an amicable turn and so they did not want that Dogra invasion of Yarkand should in any way cause them embarrassment. So the British Agent at Lahore Durbar recommended to the Sikh Maharajah “to require Raja Gulab Singh to desist from his designs on Yarkand.”<sup>7</sup> The British had always viewed with suspicion Gulab Singh’s expansionist policy. It was presumed by ‘British politicals’ that his constant endeavour was how “Upon the nucleus and foundation of the Jammu Chiefship, to build for himself a hill sovereignty both on the southern and northern slopes of the Himalayas. In the prosecution of this policy, while appearing fully occupied with Sikh affairs in the Punjab Plains, he had, during 1840 and 1841, annexed Iskardu, made Gilgit tributary, opened squabbles with Yarkand, seized Garoo in Chinese Tibet (thus monopolising trade in shawl-wool), and made the frontier of Jammoo conterminous with that of the Goorkhas in Nepaul.—no great friends of the English Empire in India.”<sup>8</sup> The success of Dogra Arms in Tibet, therefore, alarmed the British. By making a thrust into Western Tibet, observed a British Political Agent, “Raja Gulab Singh was desirous of acquiring territory, and he was also intent on monopolising the trade in shawl-wool.”<sup>9</sup>

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5. Governor-General to G. R. Clerk, 1-3-1841, *Pol. Consul. For. Dept.*, 10-3-1841, No. 129.

6. Wade to Government, 1-3-1838, *Pol. Consul. For. Dept.*, 8-8-1833, No. 28.

7. *Secret Cons. Foreign Dept.*, 25-1-1841, No. 90.

8. Edwardes and Marivale, *Life of H. M. Lawrence*, pp. 225-26.

9. Clerk to Government; 5th and 22nd June, 1841.

Ranjit Singh had also realised the value of some sort of understanding with Nepal, but he had discouraged Zorawar Singh from his Trans-Himalayan expeditions for fear of the Chinese military power.<sup>10</sup> But after his death the need for close co-operation with Nepal was felt keenly because the Lahore Kingdom had been thoroughly isolated and gradually encircled on all sides. The British diplomats, therefore, concluded that the real aim of the Dogra capture of Taklakot was to establish direct relations with Nepal in the hope of promoting a mutually advantageous alliance.<sup>11</sup> Current intelligence reports of British agents positively emphasised the fact that Zorawar Singh wanted to build a Chain of forts from Ladakh to the borders of Nepal and was endeavouring to gain Nepal's co-operation in this matter.<sup>12</sup> Probably Nepal hoped to convert this alliance into a means of recapturing Kumaon.<sup>13</sup>

As stated earlier, Gulab Singh's chief object in the conquest of Ladakh was two-fold: to encircle the Kashmir Valley, and to gain access to the lucrative wool trade.<sup>14</sup> With Ladakh in his hands all he had to do to monopolise the coveted wool trade was to conquer those areas of Tibet from which wool came. If the Ladakh's ancient claim to West Tibet could be enforced, it would give him the complete control which he desired.

It is also alleged that Zorawar Singh's own plans were the driving force behind his eastward aggressions. His plan was to give employment to his master's many new subjects in Ladakh and Baltistan, and in this way to keep their thoughts from revolutionary ideas.<sup>15</sup> He is also blamed to have gradually discovered that he was a genius in conquering, and that his gift had to be given a new field of activity.<sup>16</sup> The property

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10. V. S. Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Eng. trans., p. 282.

11. *Political proceedings*, June 12, 1837, No. 41: Wade to Chief Secretary Fort William—N.A.I., New Delhi.

12. *Secret Consultations*, September 13, 1841. No. 20, Lushington to Secretary. Govt. of N.W.P., August 15, 1841—N.A.I., New Delhi.

13. Kumaon, directly west of Nepal, had been conquered by Nepal in about 1790. But the Nepalese were pushed back to the Present boundary in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16. One important aspect of British interest in Kumaon was the desire to put a wedge of company-controlled territory between these two power states.

14. A. H. Francke, *A Hist. of the Western Tibet*, p. 161.

15. *Ibid.*

16. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 351.

of monasteries and the "vessels and instruments of gold and silver for the service of religion"<sup>17</sup> there may also have attracted his martial fancy.

The fear of the British Government, however, was readily stimulated at the realisation of the prospect of a Dogra-Sikh-Nepali axis as soon as Wazir Zorawar Singh marked his entry in Tibetan territory by storming and occupying the frontier military post of Rudok on June 5, 1841.<sup>18</sup> The British officials received the intelligence of Zorawar Singh's military exploits in Tibet with deep concern. Mr. G. R. Clerk conveyed on 15th June 1841, the first report of a collision having occurred between the troops of Zorawar Singh and the militia of Bashahr at some place near the frontier of Ladakh. He also remarked on the designs of Wazir Zorawar Singh on Kanawar and Rudok, and suggested interference.<sup>19</sup>

In order to remain well posted on the proceedings of the Dogra forces in Tibet the British authorities thought of deputing a British officer to some advance point on the frontier for the purpose of obtaining accurate and early intelligence.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, Lieutenant Joseph Davey Cunningham was appointed as Agent to the British frontier and he was ordered to proceed at once as far as he could in Kanawar, trans-Sutlej, and if possible, to Ladakh to ascertain the movements of the Jammu Rajas, on Lhasa.<sup>21</sup> Maharaja Sher Singh was also apprised of J. D. Cunningham's deputation to the borders of Ladakh to inquire into the matter.<sup>22</sup> J. D. Cunningham left Simla on October 11, 1841 and he expected to reach Shalkur about the 2nd or 3rd November.<sup>23</sup> Cunningham was instructed to inquire the intentions of Wazir Zorawar Singh or his subordinates advancing on Rudok, Gartok and Mansarowar, the number and description of troops with which he or his officers had captured the latter place, the cause and pretext of these encroachments and the nature and ramification of trade between Yarkand and Ladakh and between Bashahr and Ladakh.<sup>24</sup>

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17. *Ibid.*

18. *Secret Consultations*, December 20, 1841, No. 40. National Archives of India, New Delhi.

19. ORPS : 151/67, No. 85 of 15-6-1841, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock.

20. ORPS : 54/17, Lushington to Clerk, 15-7-1841, and 128/125, of 16-8-1841.

21. ORPS : 128/158, Thomason to G. R. Clerk, 13.9.1841, and G. R. Clerk to Cunningham, 25-9-1841.

22. ORPS : 155/131, G. R. Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh, 28.9.1841.

23. ORPS : Letter No. 8 of 11.10.1841, Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

24. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*, 25 Oct. 1841, No. 28, Clerk to Cunningham.

On reaching the border of Kanawar Cunningham observed from a close quarter all the military movements of Dogras and conveyed the intelligence to the British authorities who also received similar reports from their representatives at Kathmandu, the Commissioner of Kumaon and other sources. Posted with all the facts of the situation they assessed Dogra conquest of the regions of Tibet a great danger to their interests which were found to be in conflict with those of the Dogras and the Sikhs.

#### **British Pressure for Recall of Zorawar Singh.**

From the beginning of the Tibetan episode, the British officials were apprehensive of Chinese offence and were of the opinion that China will not view with indifference the seizure of Garo by the Sikhs.<sup>25</sup> When "the supposed Agent of Gulab Singh" had occupied the post and town of Gartok in the middle of August, the Government of India particularly became scared and advised Mr. Clerk to call on the Darbar for an explanation of these aggressions and warn it that it will be held responsible for all injurious proceedings on the part of those owing allegiance to it, and that he should let the Darbar understand that the Governor-General may probably insist on the return of the Sikh or Jammu troops from the scene of their aggression.<sup>26</sup> Clerk had already conveyed his opinion to the Lahore Darbar that he considered the conquest of Gartok an encroachment, and he had wanted to ascertain what the further intentions of the Sikh or Jammu authorities in that quarter were.<sup>27</sup>

Quite a vague answer to G. R. Clerk's inquiries was received. The reply regarding the conquest was that no certain intelligence had been received, but that Zorawar Singh had probably coerced the tribes bordering on Ladakh for their carelessness.<sup>28</sup>

The Secretary to the Government of India concurred in Mr. Clerk's opinion of the danger of allowing the Sikhs and Gulab Singh to establish their authority in that quarter. He took a stern stand and

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25. ORPS : 54 S. No. 31, dated 3. 8. 1841, B. H. Hodgson, Resident Nepal, to G. R. Clerk, Agent NWF.

26. ORPS : 128/137, pp. 279-89, Letter No. 1084, dated 16. 8. 1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent NWF.

27. ORPS : 152/32, pp. 94-101. Letter No. 129, dated 18.8.1841 ; 155/127, dated 27. 8. 1841, G. R. Clerk, Agent NWF. to Maharaja Sher Singh of Lahore.

28. ORPS : 152/43, pp. 131-33, Letter No. 140, dated 9. 9. 1841 ; 155/124, p. 129, Letter No. 1, dated 23. 9. 1841, Lahore Darbar to Rai Govind Jus.

authorised Mr. Clerk formally to require the Maharaja recall Zorawar Singh and his detachment forthwith.<sup>29</sup> Mr. Clerk launched a strong protest with the Darbar against Zorawar Singh's encroachments and renewal of Sikh claims on Chinese Tartary (Tibet). He also suggested to his Government the adoption of peremptory measures with the Darbar for the withdrawal of Zorawar Singh on account of his aggressions.<sup>30</sup>

The Maharaja Sher Singh took it easy and the Minister, Dhian Singh wanted to give ample time to his brother Gulab Singh, to take as much territory as was possible.<sup>31</sup> They therefore, neither gave satisfactory replies about Zorawar Singh's activities, nor committed themselves to the British demand of withdrawal of Zorawar Singh.<sup>32</sup> The impatient British Government could not wait for the results of the representation of Lahore court. They fixed the 10th December 1841 as the date by which the Governor-General Lord Auckland, expected Zorawar Singh's Dogra troops would withdraw.<sup>33</sup> The British Agent also drew attention to the outrage perpetrated by some of Zorawar Singh's Sowars who entered the British Parganas of Biyans in Almora and levied blackmail from its inhabitants, and hoped the perpetrators will be punished and the sufferers indemnified for their loss.<sup>34</sup>

Maharaja Sher Singh justified the proceedings of Wazir Zorawar Singh, but at the same time he also committed that orders have been issued for his return to the usual position as required by the British Govt.<sup>35</sup> The British newswriter at Lahore reported that the Maharaja had verbally told him that Wazir Zorawar Singh had been recalled and that Kesra Singh, who crossed the Sutlej into the Almora District, would be punished.<sup>36</sup> The Maharaja was even obliged to own that Zorawar

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29. ORPS : 128/162, pp. 331-32, Letter No. 1307, dated 20. 9. 1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent, NWF.

30. ORPS : 152/48, pp. 158-46, Letter No. 146, dated 22. 9. 1841, G. R. Clerk, Agent NWF, to T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India.

31. S. C. Bajpai : *The Northern Frontier of India*, 1970. p. 43,

32. ORPS : 152/49 ; pp. 146-49, Letter No. 147, dated 28 9. 1841 ; 152/54, pp. 155-57, Letter No. 154, dated 14-10-1841.

33. ORPS : 155/132, p. 140, dated 19. 10. 1841, G. R. Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh.

34. *Ibid.*

35. ORPS : 155/133, pp. 134a to 138a, dated 31-10-1841 Maharaja Sher Singh to G. R. Clerk, Agent, NWF.

36. ORPS : 155/126, p. 141, dated 31-10-1841, Lala Harsaran Das, News-Writer at Lahore.

had acted as he had in ignorance of the treaties between the Lahore and the British Governments.<sup>37</sup> The Khalsa Government then wrote a letter directing Zorawar to return to Ladakh and to send Kesra Singh to Lahore. This letter was sent through Rai Kishan Chand who read it out to Mr. G. R. Clerk, and then transmitted it to Zorawar Singh by trustworthy messengers.<sup>38</sup> Clerk was pleased to receive a kharita from the Darbar in reply to his demanding the withdrawal of Wazir Zorawar Singh, and he pointed out that "the last sentence of the post script contains an unequivocal promise to comply with the requisition of the British Government and Mr. Clerk thinks that the British Government should now compel the Sikhs to fulfil the agreement."<sup>39</sup> His insistence on compelling the Sikhs reveals his anxiety about Sikh intentions in the affair. Even Cunningham informs that Mian Zorawar Singh had apparently not received upto 18th November, the orders of the Lahore Durbar directing him to withdraw to Ladakh.<sup>40</sup> Sheikh Gulam Mohi-uddin reported from Cashmere that Wazeer Zorawar Singh "was still on the other side of Ladakh owing to the fall of snow, but was prepared to return to that place."<sup>41</sup>

The Dogra Rajas and their general Mian Zorawar Singh, had resented all this interference by the British Government in their affairs. They did not relish the idea of relinquishing their Tibetan conquests. But they could not side-track the desire of their over-lord, Maharaja Sher-Singh. Differences between the Maharaja and his Minister, Raja Dhian Singh, over the Tibetan affair had appeared and this matter was reported to the British Government in an intelligence dated November 26, 1841. The Maharaja had desired Fakir Aziz-Ud-Din to write a letter on His Highness' part to Mr. Clerk stating the urgency of the Maharaja's orders to recall Wazir Zorawar Singh from the scene of new conquests against the will of the Rajas; to which the Fakir replied that such a letter would only exhibit a difference between His Highness and his Minister and produce no benefit.<sup>42</sup>

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37. ORPS : 155/134, pp. 138a—140a ; 155/134, pp. 140a-141a, Maharaja Sher Singh to Rai Kishan Chand.

38. ORPS : 155/137, pp. 142-143, dated 1-11-1841, Khalsa Government to its Agent at Ludhiana, Rai Kishan Chand.

39. ORPS : 152/61, dated 31-10-1841, G. R. Clerk to Maddock.

40. ORPS : 113/5, dated 18-11-1841, Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

41. *Punjab Akhbars*. No. 613, dated 22-11-1841.

42. *Punjab Akhbars*, 1839-40, No. 617, dated 26-11-1841, p. 263.

In the face of British protests and the Maharaja's anxiety to back up the British demand, Raja Dhian Singh was left with no other alternative than to seek British cooperation in the Dogra designs on Tibet. He tried to entice British Authorities in the plan of Tibetan conquests by suggesting that the Sikh and British Governments should cooperate against the Chinese.<sup>43</sup> Raja Dhian Singh even conveyed his personal suggestion to the British Authorities that "were an invasion to be undertaken in great force on this frontier of China in concert with the British Government, it would be very beneficial to both the allied Governments."<sup>44</sup>

These approaches, however, were discouraged by the British Officials, and Raja Dhian Singh had at last to order the Wazir to return to Ladakh. The Wazir in consequence recalled all his officers and troops from advance posts. But he still retained the possession of all his conquests. At the same time he greatly regretted the receipt of such orders and reported to Rajas Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, denying any interference with the Almora and Kumaon districts, and informed them that he had withdrawn all his troops from near that country, and that no movement could now be effected owing to the fall of snow, but that he will return himself to Ladakh without fail.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Raja Gulub Singh also wrote to Wazir Zorawar Singh of the disturbances in Khorasan and ordered him to protect the country in his charge and to report his arrival at Ladakh, as well as to despatch his agents to Lieut. J. D. Cunningham.<sup>46</sup> The Pārwanas from Lahore Darbar directing Zorawar Singh to withdraw to Ladakh were forwarded to him through J. D. Cunningham. The Lahore Darbar had ultimately acquiesced in the British demand of withdrawal of conquering troops and the relinquishment of new conquests.

### 3. THE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

#### (a) The Alleged Commercial Interest

The real causes for the British intervention in the Dogra conquest of Tibet are not for to seek. The British commercial interests in Tibet and Bashahr have been presumed by many to be one of these. The

43. ORPS : 152/55, pp. 158-59, letter No. 155, dated 20-10-1841, G. R. Clerk, Agent N. W. F. to T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India.

44. *Punjab Akhbars*, 1839-40, p. 261, dated 22-11-1841.

45. *Ibid.*

46. *Punjab Akhbars*, 1839-40, p. 267, No. 623, dated 30-11-1841.



lucrative shawl-wool trade had normally flowed from the plains of Chang Tang, (North-Western Tibet) through Ladakh to the looms of Kashmir. The hostilities and the subsequent disorders attending the Dogra Conquest of Ladakh since 1834 had temporarily diverted the shawl-wool trade to Bashahr. The initial effect of the occupation of Western Tibet by the Dogras was a sharp drop in the flow of wool to the factories of Bashahr. The officials of East India Company probably resented this slump and they pointed out the aggressions of the Sikhs (Jammu Rajas) in Tibet and their "injurious effect on trade with Bashahr."<sup>47</sup> The Commissioner of Kumaon went to the length of suggesting "the interference of the British in order to revive the trade which is at present at a stand-still,"<sup>48</sup> and Mr. Clerk was required to launch an effective protest in the matter with the Lahore Darbar.

Zorawar Singh could, however, prefer a prior claim on the shawl-wool trade which originally flowed through Ladakh to Srinagar before 1830.<sup>49</sup> But the explanation offered by Zorawar Singh of his reasons for interfering with the course of trade beyond the Bashahr frontier was quite inadmissible to the Company's Officials,<sup>50</sup> who wanted to declare explicitly to the Maharaja that the British Government would on no account permit any interruption to the free intercourse which subsisted between its subjects and the merchants of the countries beyond the frontier. Mr. Clerk was advised to insist on the immediate withdrawal of all novel restrictions imposed on this trade.<sup>51</sup> When Lieut. J. D. Cunningham arrived at Shalkur in November, 1841, he brought to the notice of his masters "the embargo laid on trade with our provinces by the Sikhs."<sup>52</sup> Cunningham took great pains in collecting data on trade and forwarding reports pertaining to Bashahr trade and the effect which might have been produced on it by the late proceedings of

47. ORPS : 128/124, pp. 243-45, dated 31.7.1841, T. Thomason to G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor-General, N.W.F.

48. ORPS : 128/140, pp. 292-94, dated 17.8.1841, T. Thomason to G. R. Clerk.

49. *Press Lists of Old Records, Vol. VII*, S. No. 703, Despatch No. 130, of the 20th August, 1841.

50. ORPS : 128/152, pp. 311-12, Letter No. 1215, dated 6.9.1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Govt. of India, to G. R. Clerk, Agent, N.W.F.

51. *Ibid.*

52. ORPS : 152/160, p. 165, Letter No. 166, dated 29.10.1841 ; 113/3, Letter No. 3, dated 8.11.1841. J. D. Cunningham, Asstt. Agent on Deputation to Bashahr, to G. R. Clerk, 113/4, Letter No. 4, dated 13.11.1841.

Zorawar Singh in the adjoining territories.<sup>53</sup> British Officials and Agents continued to study and report on injurious effects on trade of the Dogra occupation of Western Tibet till the middle of 1842, and complained of hardship and injustice which the Bashahr and Kanawari traders had suffered at the hands of Sikhs since they possessed themselves of Ladakh.<sup>54</sup> Cunningham forwarded to his Government translations of the statements of traders and also the original orders purporting to emanate from Raja Gulab Singh, or Wazir Zorawar Singh (probably the latter), under which duties are levied from British traders.<sup>55</sup>

After the withdrawal of Dogra claims on Western Tibet the question of Indo-Tibetan trade had to be taken up with the Lhasa authorities. The Lhasa Wazir, Zoorkung assured Cunningham of giving protection to traders as before, but announced that if the trade in shawl-wool through Bashahr arose subsequent to the Sikh occupation of Ladakh, it must be discontinued.<sup>56</sup> Although Cunningham stressed the point that the trade had been in existence for upwards of 20 years, yet the British Government did not give it much serious thought. It seems to have been aware of the fact that flow of trade in hills followed the course dictated by convention and topographical factors rather than trade pacts.

The British Government was finally informed of the possibility of the Sikhs and Tibetans coming to an understanding to adjust their existing differences on terms based upon a monopoly of the shawl-wool trade in favour of Kashmir via Ladakh. The question was posed<sup>57</sup> whether the British Government will regard with indifference the sacrifice of a rising trade and manufacture which famine and oppression in Kashmir and the war on the eastern frontier of Ladakh had created in the territories of the Government of India and which a secure supply of shawl-wool by the direct route of Bashahr to the plains would greatly extend. But the question was not brought to any conclusion. With the

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53. ORPS : 113/4, Letter No. 4, dated 13.1.1841 ; 152/80, p. 213, Letter No. 207, dated 29-11-1841 ; 128/206 p 413, Letter No. 1703, dated 22-11-1841.

54. ORPS : 113/8, pp. 27-9, Letter No. 8, dated 14.12.1841, Cunningham to G. R. Clerk ; 113/29, pp. 103-6, letter No. 28, dated 27.5.1842 ; 113/26, pp. 87-95, letter No. 25.

55. ORPS : 113/26, pp. 87-95, Letter No. 25, dated 8.5.1841,

56. ORPS : 113/36, pp. 136-44, Letter No. 35, dated 30.7.1842.

57. ORPS : 154/35, pp. 136-44, Letter No. 346, dated 14.8.1842, G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor-General, N.W.F., to T. H. Maddock, Secretary, Government of India.

cession of hostilities between the Dogras and Tibetans, the old trade relations between Leh and Lhasa, which the wars had for a time upset, were restored by the treaty signed on 22nd September 1842,<sup>58</sup> which laid down : "That in conformity with ancient usage tea, Pusham and Shawl wool shall be transmitted by the Ladakh road. That no person from Ladakh to Tibet and vice versa will be obstructed."<sup>59</sup> The British Government raised no objection to this trade settlement. Trade seemed to have been just an excuse for the British Government to exhibit their displeasure of the Dogra-Sikh forward policy in Tibet which had threatened their political position. In fact, they had no trade interests in Tibet, except those of a local nature, and this local trade on both sides of the boarder continued as usual even after the settlement.

(b) **The Bashahr Pretext**

The one interest of the British authorities in Bashahr, as revealed by contemporary records, was the safeguarding of that State as part of Kumaon which they had acquired from Nepal by the treaty of Sanguli of 1816.<sup>60</sup> The westwards thrust of Dogra Forces seemed to threaten Bashahr frontier and their reported aggression on its fringes caused some misunderstanding. As early as January 1841 the British authorities had suspected Sikh invasion of Bashahr, but their doubts were set at rest by the intelligence received on 18.1.1841 that the invasion of Bashahr by the Sikh forces will be prevented.<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile, Col. H. T. Tapp, Political Agent, subathu had procured documents which revealed that Bashahr State was never subject to Lahore or Tibet.<sup>62</sup> This information enabled Clerk to uphold the independence of Bashahr State should any discussion arise on the subject with the Lahore Darbar. Conveying this evidence he applied to Lahore Darbar for the prevention of aggression of Zorawar Singh on the Bashahr

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58. Diwan Kirpa Ram in *Gulabnamah*, p. 264, gives 2 Asuj 1899 which corresponds to 22 September 1842. Aitchison : *Treaties, Engagements and sands*, has 17 September 1842. Panikkar, p. 85, gives 15 August 1842. The copy of treaty forwarded by Raja of Bashahr gives the date 17 October 1842, Asuj 23, 1899 (Eskrine to Clerk, 1 April 1843, *Foreign Secret*, 26 May, 1843, Nos. 61-63).

59. Eskrine to Clerk, 1 April 1843. *For. Secret*, 24 May 1843, Nos. 61-63 ; Sapru, Appendix I ; Cunningham, pp. 220-21 ; Panikkar, pp. 84-89:

60. Col. J. Nicholls to C. M. Ricketts, Principal Private Secretary, 16 May 1815, No. 44: *Historical Papers Relating to Kumaun 1809-1842* (Allahabad, 1956) p. 30 — by B. P. Saxena.

61. *Press Lists of old Records, etc.*, p. 105, S. No. 447.

62. ORPS : 128/52, pp. 110-117, dated 8.3.1841, J. Thomason, Secretary to Govt. of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent, N.W.F.

Frontier.<sup>63</sup> The Lahore Government was given an emphatic warning that the British Government will not countenance any aggression on its part or that of its Ministers, Rajas Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, on that frontier.<sup>64</sup> In response the Darbar gave an assurance, and directed its Vakil, Lala Chuni Lal, to see that no aggressions are committed by the State of Lahore on the borders of Bashahr.<sup>65</sup>

These British precautions in Bashahr prevented the Dogra Forces of Mian Zorawar Singh from attacking on Bashahr State. Slight infringements, however, could not be avoided. The Raja of Bashahr preferred a complaint of the forcible seizure of one of his forts by Zorawar Singh, the truth of which the latter denied.<sup>66</sup> It was also reported that a Sikh Sardar, named Kesra Singh, acting under orders of Zorawar Singh, had entered British Territory or Biyans and exacted dues from Bhoties.<sup>67</sup> Some more complaints from the Raja and Wazir of Bashahr were forwarded to the British Government, including the alleged withholding of certain dues and interfering with the Tibetan trade, etc; by the Sikh Authorities.<sup>68</sup>

The British officials demanded the punishment by the Darbar of the official commanding this aggressive party for levying a sum of money from the villagers,<sup>69</sup> Cunningham was ordered by his masters to enquire into these complaints and also to grant redress. He claimed compensation from the Sikh and Ladakhi authorities to the Raja of Bashahr.<sup>70</sup> The Maharaja seems to have assured British Authorities to redress these complaints and that Kesra Singh, who crossed the Sutlej into Almora

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63. ORPS : 123/109, p 222, dated 11.7.1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to Govt. of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent, Governor-General, N.W.F.

64. ORPS : 128/109, p. 222, dated 11 17.1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to Govt. of India, to G. R. Clerk, Agent, N.W.F.

65. ORPS : 155/102, pp. 113-15 sent to the Indian Government on 22.6.1841.

66. ORPS : 155/104. pp. 116-17, dated 18 8.1841, Letter from Wazir Zorawar Singh to Lahore Govt.

67. ORPS : 54/74, dated 23.9.1841, G. T. Lushington, Commissioner Kumaun to the Secretary NWF., *Secret & Political Dept.* Agra.

68 ORPS : 152/68, p. 187, letter No. 176, dated 10.11.1841, G. R. Clerk to R. N. C. Hamilton, Officiating Secretary to the Govt. of N. W. F.

69. ORPS : 125/172, pp. 349-50, Letter No. 1430, dated 8-10-1841, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to Govt. of India to Clerk.

70. ORPS : 86/249, p.155, Letter No. 248, dated 6.12.1841, G. R. Clerk to J. D. Cunningham.

District, would be punished,<sup>71</sup> The Raja of Bashahr also put up his claims on two villages in Spiti, Pin and Gheo, which was now under Dogra occupation as part of Ladakh. After looking into the matter Cunningham rejected his claim on Gheo but upheld that on Pin. About these villages he wrote to Mian Dulu Singh, the Dogra Officer stationed in Spiti.<sup>72</sup>

It seems that the Dogra involvement in Bashahr was not at all feared. This affair, however, may have been pressed beyond proportions with a view to heighten the gravity of the Dogra forward policy in Tibet and justify the British demand of Zorawar Singh's withdrawal.

(c) **The Real Apprehensions.**

The Dogra-Sikh invasion of Tibet had threatened the Political interests of the East India Company, and its officials viewed with genuine suspicion the rapid march of Dogra armies across the world's loftiest plateau. The capture by Dogras of Taklakot, close to the borders of Nepal caused real anxiety of the British Indian Government. In an uneasy consternation, they reacted violently to the Dogra movements. The increasing power and prestige of Dogra Rajas, particularly of Raja Gulab Singh, was unsavoury to British rulers of India.

Gulab Singh has not only established himself firmly in Jammu province, but had entrenched his power in Ladakh and Baltistan. He was trying to spread his influence through the hill states under British protection, through matrimonial negotiations. He had negotiated the marriage of the daughter of the Raja of Bashahr to his son.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, he was claiming the customary presents from Lahul, Kulu and Spiti which these principalities used to make to the Ladakhi kingdom in the past, in order to increase his influence.<sup>74</sup>

The British Government was painfully alive to the danger of the increasing Dogra influence. Regarding the Dogra intentions in Tibet they were of the opinion that Raja Gulab Singh "had no further object in sending his troops to Chinese Tartary than to institute enquiries into

71. ORPS: 155/136, p. 141, dated 31-10-1841, from Lala Harsaran Das, British News-Writer at Lahore to G. R. Clerk.

72. ORPS: 113/15, pp. 48-50, Letter No. 15, dated 9-1-1842, Cunningham to G. R. Clerk.

73. S. C. Bajpai: *The Northern Frontier of India*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Bombay 1970, p. 42.

74. Alastair Lamb: *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London 1960, p. 68.

the nature of the country with the ultimate view of establishing a hill sovereignty<sup>75</sup>..." They were agitated on the "Passion which appears to be entertained by the Jammu Rajas for making conquests in the Chinese Tartary." Such schemes, they felt, should be discouraged as they could lead to consequences affecting the British Government in India.<sup>76</sup> The British officials noticed with deep concern "their erroneous ambition of possessing territories beyond the Himalayas"<sup>77</sup> and realised the danger of allowing them to establish their authority in Tibet.<sup>78</sup>

Thus the British authorities had come to the conclusion on the character of the aggrandisements of the Jammu Rajas that their forward movement eastward resulting in a connection between the Sikh and the Nepalese would be dangerous to British interests.<sup>79</sup>

A Dogra-Sikh-Nepalese rapprochement was a great political complication which might have endangered the British Government in India. From the Gorkha War of 1814-16, the cardinal point of the British policy towards Nepal was the political isolation of Nepal from other Indian states. The situation was made grave by the approach of Dogra forces near the border of Nepal.<sup>80</sup> When Raja Gulab Singh conquered Ladakh, it was rumoured that his real aim was to extend borders of Lahore Kingdom to verge on Nepal in the hope of promoting a mutually advantageous alliance.<sup>81</sup> and having a direct contact with that Hindu power. The current intelligence stated that Zorawar Singh intended to build a chain of forts from Ladakh to the borders of

75. ORPS : *Bundle No. 41B*, S. No. 45 A, Letter dated 17-2-1842, Captain H. M. Lawrence, Asstt : Agent, Governor-General, Peshawar to G. R. Clerk, Agent, N. W. F.

76. ORPS : BK—130, S. No. 84, pp. 205-6, Letter No. 26, dated 27.4 1842, T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Govt. of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent, NWF.

77. *Ibid.*

78. ORPS : 128/162, pp. 331-32, No. 1307, dated 20-9-1841, T. H. Maddock to G. R. Clerk.

79. ORPS : 152/41 pp. 127-30, Letter No. 138, 4 9.1841, G. R. Clerk, Agent Governor-General, NWF. to T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Govt. of India.

80. Minute by the Lt. Governor T. C. Robertson, Meerut, 28 Sept. 1841 : *Foreign Secret*, 11 October 1841, Nos. 46-51.

81. *Polistical Proceedings*, No. 41, June 12, 1837 : Wade to Chief Secretary, Fort William-National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Nepal, and was attempting to gain Nepal's co-operation in this endeavour.<sup>82</sup> It was conjectured that Nepal hoped to obtain from this alliance a means of recapturing Kumaon which he had lost to the company after the Anglo-Nepali war of 1814-15. One important aspect of British interest in Kumaon was the desire to put a wedge of company-controlled territory between these two powerful states.<sup>83</sup>

Nepal's intentions of fishing in the troubled waters were quite evident from her actions. As soon as the intelligence of the attack made by the Dogras on the Western districts of Tibet had reached Kathmandu, the Raja of Nepal proposed an incursion into Tibet from Jumla in the vicinity of which there were gold mines but was dissuaded by his minister.<sup>84</sup> The involvement of Nepal in aid of Ladakh or Tibet was also suspected. As early as May 1841 the rumour of some message sent to Raja of Nepal from Ladakh was afloat which was corroborated by reports from the British Resident in Nepal.<sup>85</sup> Further inquiries revealed the presence of Ladakhi Envoys at Kathmandu sent with a view to obtain aid against the Sikhs.<sup>86</sup> One of the Ladakhi envoys carried his plaint against the Sikhs to Lhasa which however declined to interfere. But the British Authorities were sure Lhasa will not view with indifference the seizure of Garoo by the Sikhs.<sup>87</sup> Later on, G. R. Clerk pointed out the presence of Gurkhas with the Tibetan troops.<sup>88</sup>

The British fears concerning Nepal were increasing from 1837, when a Nepali delegation had been well received in Lahore. The establishment of a Dagra post at Taklakot made the situation grave and the British Government decided not to allow the Lahore and Nepal dominions to

82. *Secret Consultations*; No. 20, Sept. 13, 1841, Lushington, Commissioner of Kumaon to Thompson, Secretary, Government of NWP,—A National Archives of India, New Delhi.

83. Margaret W. Fisher, Leo E. Rose, & Robert A. Huttenback: *Himalayan Battleground*, New York, 1963, p. 50.

84. ORPS : 54/30, dated 31.7.1841, B. H. Hodgson, Resident Nepal, to G. R. Clerk; *Press Lists etc.*, Vol. VII, p. 328, No. 348.

85. *Press Lists*, Vol. VII, S. No. 571, Letter No. 72, dated 13.5.1841, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India

86. *Press Lists*, Vol. VII, S. No. 619, letter No. 92, dated 16.6.1841. ORPS : 128/99, pp. 206-8, Letter No. 826, dated 21.6.1841, Secretary to Government of India to G. R. Clerk, Agent, NWF.

87. ORPS : 54/31, dated 3.8.1841, B. H. Hodgson, Resident Nepal, to G. R. Clerk.

88. ORPS : 153/15, pp. 36-38, Letter No. 35, dated 19.1.1842, G. R. Clerk to T. H. Maddock, Secretary to the Govt. of India.

march with one another behind the Himalayas.<sup>89</sup> It was also thought that the pending negotiations in the Opium war with China might be affected by the presence of Dogras in Tibet.<sup>90</sup> Before all these events could combine to jeopardise British interests, the authorities decided to act. They demanded the withdrawal of the Dogra General Zorawar Singh, and his troops from Tibet ; and when they were informed that the Lhasa troops were already engaged in repelling the encroachments of Zorawar Singh, Cunningham was assured that "there will be no objection to restoring Garo to the Lhasa authorities if they do not recover it themselves."<sup>91</sup>

The Government of East India Company thus apprehended a number of alignments against British interests in India. Any Lahore-Kathmandu rapprochement would have been harmful to the British, who were well aware of the extensive network of anti-British intrigue that reached out from Nepal to every important ruler in India and to such foreign courts as Burma and Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup> For many years, it was a cardinal object of British policy to see that Nepal did not obtain a common frontier with any other "Powerful and aspiring hill state."<sup>93</sup>

For the same reasons they could not countenance any Sino-Nepali co-operation against the Dogras. The night-mare of Lahore-Nepal or Sino-Nepali axis kept the officials of the East India Company uneasy. All these fears could be dispelled only in the event of the evacuation of Dogra aggression. For the attainment of this object they even offered to handover to the Sikhs or Raja Gulab Singh the territory of Jalalabad.<sup>94</sup> To avert such an eventuality they even contemplated sterner steps so that "the arrogance and presumption of our neighbours" may not be "proportionally increased."<sup>95</sup>

89. S. C. Bajpai : *The Northern Frontier of India*, 1970, p. 43.

90. *Ibid.*

91. ORPS : 86/264, p. 163, Letter No. 263, dated 13-12-1841, G. R. Clerk to J. D. Cunningham, Asstt. Agent, on deputation to Bashahr.

92. Leo E. Rose ; "The Role of Nepal and Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations," quoted in *The Himalayan Battleground*, etc., p. 51.

93. *Secret Consultations*, Enclosure, Vol. 79, 1841., Thomason to Lushington, September 1, 1841.

94. ORPS : 130/84, pp. 205-6, Letter No. 26, dated 27-4-1842, T. H. Maddock to G. R. Clerk ; 131/32. p-67, Letter No. 454, dated 25-6-1842, T. H. Maddock to G. R. Clerk.

95. *Sec. Cons. For. Deptt.* of 13.9.1841, No. 19, Thomason to Maddock, 4.9.1841.



The Governor-General, therefore, instructed Mr. G. R. Clerk to inform Maharaja Sher Singh that it was impossible for the British Government to hear without displeasure of outrages of this atrocious nature against its subjects or those of his dependents<sup>96</sup> and in case Zorawar Singh was not restrained, the long-standing Anglo-Sikh friendship will be irrevocably damaged. The British Government heightened the gravity of the affair by bringing forth various insinuations as narrated above to justify their demand for recall of the Dogra General for which they exerted a heavy pressure on the court of Lahore. They even set 10th December, 1841 as the deadline for the withdrawal of the Dogra Forces.<sup>97</sup> In case compliance was not made by that date then the British Government threatened to adopt its own measures for curbing the unwarrantable and hostile proceedings of those under whose directions Zorawar was acting.<sup>98</sup> The British Agent deputed to the border of Ladakh was instructed to witness and report on its evacuation by the Dogras.<sup>99</sup> The British Officers were anxious to know how the Lahore Darbar reacted to their demand and J. D. Cunningham was instructed also to supply timely information of the measures that may be taken by the Sikhs in Tibet consequent on the demand made on Maharaja Sher Singh for the withdrawal of Zorawar Singh and the relinquishment of his late conquests.<sup>100</sup> They were also aware of the differences which had arisen between the Dogra Rajas and Maharaja Sher Singh on the Tibetan affair and perhaps they expected the Rajas to be reluctant to carry out the wishes of the Maharaja, so the British Government was insistent on making the Maharaja realise that it was his "duty to put an instant stop to their aggressions either by his own means or if those are not adequate to the purpose by uniting with the British Government to affect that object."<sup>101</sup> Thus on this occasion the British Governor-General seemed intent on supporting his political moves by military forces. Sher Singh, however, "could not afford to impair his amiable relations with the British".<sup>102</sup> He therefore, hurried to order Zorawar Singh to move back within the former possessions of Ladakh,<sup>103</sup> and asked him

96. *Ibid*, 1.11.1841, No. 38, Governor-General to Clerk, 1.11.1841.

97. C. L. Datta, *Ladakh & Western Himalayan Politics*, p. 163.

98. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*; 11.10.1841, No. 47, Govt. to Clerk, 8.10.1841.

99. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* of 8.11.1841, No. 45, & of 11-10-1841 No. 47.

100. *Press Lists, VIII*, No. 417, letter No. 178 of 20-10-1841, G. R. Clerk to Cunningham.

101. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.*; 20-9-1841, No. 66, Government to Clerk.

102. *Ibid*, 22.11.1841, No. 20, Clerk to Government, 4.11.1841.

103. *Ibid*; Also No. 18 of 22.11.1841, Clerk to Maddock, 31.10.1841.

to present rupees 525 as Ziafat and rupees 125 as Sarwarna to Lt. Cunningham. He was also desired to procure a Razinama or certificate of satisfaction from the British observer in West Tibet.<sup>104</sup>

But before these proceedings could take any shape the Tibetan Armies and the cavalcade of winter had moved against the Dogra Forces of occupation and the decisive battle was fought at To-Yo resulting in the death of Zorawar Singh and the destruction of the Dogra Army. This changed the whole situation as well as the British attitude towards Dogra Rajas. Now they tried to placate Gulab Singh by upholding his claim over Ladakh against the Tibetans, and later on offered their good offices to adjust differences between the Dogra Raja and the Chinese, for they needed Gulab Singh's help in their march on Jalalabad and Kabul.

But Gulab Singh had resented this British interference in his Tibetan affairs. He did not forgive them for their political pressurisation in Zorawar Singh episode. While the British Governor-General was brow-beating Gulab Singh's suzerain and frightening him in to disowning Zorawar and order his recall, Gulab Singh was showing his resentment by delaying the advance of the Anglo-British relieving force towards Kabul where 16000 British army had been entrapped by the Afghans. The subtle machinations of the Dogra brothers, Dhian Singh and Gulab Singh, bring into focus the strange transactions at Peshawar where a Sikh army 25,000 strong stood equally hostile both to the Afghans as well as to the British.<sup>105</sup> The British exerted all their influence and force to compel Dogra Rajas to evacuate their conquests without perhaps realising that subtle Gulab Singh was equally impeding the progress of British troops towards Kabul<sup>106</sup> which caused the ultimate annihilation of 16,000 British army in the Afghan snows as well as disfigure the British nose which no plastic surgery of later expeditions could restore it to former beauty.

The unwanted British interference in his Tibetan affairs provoked Gulab Singh to bring into play the black magic of diplomacy to vanquish his white rivals and make them realise his power and sway in the Punjab. The British 'politicals' at Peshawar learnt to treat him better than they had done before the Kabul disaster. They were convinced that only Gulab Singh was the person who could help them to cross the Khaibar and avenge themselves on the Afghans.

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104. *Sec. Cons. For. Dept.* ; No. 18 of 22.11.1841. Same to same.

105. Bikramjit Hasrat, *Punjab Papers*, p. 4.

106. ORPS : 40/171, of 8.12.1841, Mackeson to G. R. Clerk ; and 4/178 of 13.2 1841, same to same.

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Zorawar Singh and his Military System*

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Zorawar Singh seems to have fallen a victim to his own miscalculation and to the British calculated interference in the affair. The invisible cause of defeat, which vanquishes great conquering armies even when these have all the forces of their power intact, cannot be ruled out. Sometimes the physical make-up of a country and the effects of its extreme climate become a potent factor in the defeat of an army and all provisions made against such eventualities fail to change the course of events. Similar factors seem to have been at work in Zorawar's case. "It was a great mistake", says Francke, "on the part of Zorawar to start on this new expedition at the approach of winter." In this case it was absolute folly to lead an Indian Army in winter in a battlefield which was situated at an altitude of 15,000 feet.

Nevertheless, his exploits brought honour not only to his memory, but to the entire military system of India. The conception that Indian Armies remained confined to its own soil and never won laurels in foreign countries, have been belied by the Dogras more than once and they prove that Indian forces in the past also could conquer foreign lands if they chose to do so. The soldiers of Nurpur-Pathankot Raj extended Mughal conquests beyond the Hindu Kush as has been related above. The Dogra force under Zorawar extended Indian frontiers beyond the highest northern Himalayas. These are no mean achievements of the martial spirit of India which is usually wedded to the ideal of peaceful coexistence with its neighbours from the time immemorial, although her neighbours have frequently violated her borders and desecrated her soil by unnecessary bloodshed.

Zorawar was "the greatest general the Dogras have ever had." "Oriental though he was, we cannot help admiring a greatness in this man by which he by far surpassed his surroundings. He was extremely cautious in his movements, so essentially necessary considering the naturally protected position of Western Tibet and his entire want of

knowledge of the geographical conditions of this country. But, as he had a keen eye for the defects of his enemy, and was a great strategist, all these difficulties were overcome.<sup>1</sup> He proved himself a true soldier in the endurance of extraordinary hardships. He was a great military genius and a skilled soldier and commander.

Besides<sup>2</sup> being an intrepid commander, he was also gifted with considerable political ability. His settlement of the newly-conquered provinces bears witness to this. To have marched an army not once or twice, but six times over the snow-clad ranges of Ladakh and Baltistan, 15,000 feet above sea level, where the air is so rarefied that people from the plains can hardly live with comfort, is no mean achievement. To have conquered that country after successive campaigns and reduced it to a peaceful province is an exploit for which there is no parallel in Indian History. His greatness will shine through the pages of Indian History as that of a great and noble warrior of whose achievements India could be justly proud." "He was an unassuming and simple man but a strict disciplinarian." Writes Lieutenant Colonel Govardhan Singh in the U. S. I. Journal, "He was uneducated but intelligent and kind yet firm. He led a very simple life", and as has been pointed out by K. M. Panikkar, he lived on his meagre pay and never made money from his campaigns or accepted any bribe or presents. He deposited each and every pie obtained during his campaigns in the State Treasury. He never sent any despatches or information about his conquests except the revenue and tributes, and the Maharaja had to discover from them what new country his General had conquered. He was so honest that once when the Maharaja asked him to demand something for himself he demanded only two things ; food to eat and the clothes used by the Maharaja himself to wear and nothing else. He never accepted a gift nor allowed his soldiers to accept one. Looting and pillaging were unknown to his soldiers, for his punishments were exemplary. His soldiers loved him, for he would go into the minutest details of administration and their welfare. Although his name is still associated with terror in the areas he conquered and is often used by mothers to quieten their babies, yet it is a fact that he never harassed the public, neither converted them nor destroyed their religious places and institutions. After the battle was over, he was considerate towards his opponent and he administered conquered areas through local rulers.

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1. Francke, A. H , *A Hist. of Western Tibet*, p.

2. Quoted from *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, by K. M. Panikkar, p. 82.

His use of local resources in men and horses shows his administrative ability.

His capture of the famous 'Mantalai' (i.e., Manasarovara), flag, which is now the proud possession of 4th Battalion, The JAK Rifles, which then formed part of Zorawar's Force, reveals the quality of leadership and resourcefulness he possessed. It was the month of August, 1841. At Dogpacha, near Missar, a place about one day's march from the famous Lakes Manasarovara and Rakastal, an action was fought, probably on 7 August. At this place the Dogra Army had reached a region where the caravan road crossed over three nullahs flowing down the 22,000 feet high Mount Kailash into the Satluj. Zorawar Singh established at this place a camp for the night and issued instructions for the next day's march to the Sacred Lake and the Kailash parvat which would be an occasion of great sanctity and pilgrimage. The Tibetan Commander of Gartok had already withdrawn to that place and entrenched there to give battle to the Indian Forces of Zorawar with the aid of some 1,200 local force and 250 Jukpas tribesmen, as narrated earlier. In the middle of the night, the Tibetan Forces surprised the Dogras and attacked them with all the strength. The Dogra Force was caught unawares and it seemed impossible to resist effectively the well-planned and co-ordinated night attack by the Tibetans in the darkness when the visibility was almost zero. As happens on similar occasions, a great confusion prevailed and the Dogras, Baltis and Ladakhis commenced fighting each other. Zorawar handled the situation tactfully. He at once issued brief but succinet orders in a loud voice, that a man belonging to his force would shout "Jammu Raj Ki Jai" to be answered by 'Sitla Mata Ki Jai'. Any body who failed to utter the required slogan was to be slain unhesitatingly. The device worked miracles. It not only overcame the crisis and enabled Dogra men to single out their foes, but also charged them with zeal and confidence which stood them in good stead in the hand-to-hand fight in the dark. A fierce battle continued till day break when the Tibetans took to flight. The Dogras, however, captured their flag bearing a strange device of a dragon, called by the Dogras 'Mantalai flag'.

Zorawar stands out as a leader of men, particularly under trying and difficult conditions which distinguish him as a military general from others. He always believed in personal example and was often found amongst the leading troops in the battle. In fact, he was always present wherever his personal presence was required. He would have defeated the Lhasa Troops and occupied Lhasa before the winter. However, it was not to be. After having been deflected from his main aim by a

strange hand of destiny cast through the British diplomacy, Zorawar contented with his achievements and went for a pilgrimage to various religious monasteries, the Sacred Lake of Mansarowar and Mount Kailash. He decided to return to Leh after stationing garrisons at important places and forts.<sup>3</sup> But his death on 12th December 1841 upset the apple-cart of Tibetan conquests by the Dogras and the conquering expedition over the Tibetan plateau met a complete disaster.

The human machinery with whose medium Zorawar achieved such spectacular victories was organised on such sound lines as gave it a unity and compactness and infused in it confidence, optimism and high morale. Good administration seems to be one of Zorawar's strong points. He knew that high altitude warfare in cold regions required acclimatization, hard training and proper administration. The first he achieved in Kishtwar where his troops got training for many years at a height of some 5 or 6 thousand feet before they entered a career of conquests in Ladakh and Baltistan. When his Dogra soldiers became used to Balti and Ladakhi geographical conditions, he moved them over the high and cold Tibetan plateau some 14,000 feet above sea level, with astonishing success. He gave his infantry hard training to improve its power of endurance, so that once in the month of January he marched his army from Jammu to Leh by a direct route over some 14 to 17 thousand feet high passes and surprised the rebellious Gyalpo of Ladakh in ten days. As Napoleon used to say about the extreme mobility of his armies, so in the case of Zorawar, it were legs which achieved his victories. Resourcefulness is one of the great qualities of a successful military commander. Zorawar had a lavish gift of this. He made full use of local resources in men and ponies, fodder as well co-operation of native population and chiefs, thereby economising his own force and resources. He strengthened his hold on conquered territories by winning local chiefs, and by treating the population kindly after they had submitted. He strengthened the lines of communications and ensured their security by leaving small garrisons along the route of his advance. He even succeeded in making the conquered people his partners in further conquests. He used Ladakhis in furthering his

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3. *General Zorawar Singh Souvenir*, 1968, "Trans-Himalayan Campaigns of General Zorawar Singh," by Lt. Col. Goverdhan Singh Jamwal.

conquests on Baltistan, and both the Baltis and Ladakhis in conducting his Tibetan campaigns.

It is noteworthy that Zorawar's military campaigns were characterised by utmost caution, adequate pre-planning and preparation. Like a dexterous politician and astute general he anticipated situations and made suitable provisions for them before he embarked on a campaign. He took a full stock of the strength, fighting ability and disposition of the enemy. In order to be able to do so he gathered full information on the nature of the country and the character of the chief and his army he was about to attack. For this purpose he adopted several methods. He used to meet people who were conversant with that country, talk to them and collected from them all relevant information which could help him make a true assessment of its military power, the characteristics of the people as well as the land. He would contract traders, travellers, offended people and ascertain the location of forts, nature of routes and the state of provisions and resources. This he did for several years before launching his armies into Ladakh. Similarly, his Tibetan campaign was preceded by an exhaustive enquiry about the geography, history and military organisation of that country.

For securing intelligence he won over local people by promises of rewards which he invariably fulfilled. He amply rewarded local agents who guided his forces through unknown routes and who furnished him useful intelligence about enemy positions. He made a good use of disaffected elements in Ladakh and Baltistan. He sided with Kahlon... against the Gyalpo of Ladakh, and similarly gave shelter to the son of the Raja of Iskardu to plan the conquest of that country. He thus successfully used to his advantage the disgruntled elements in the countries he conquered, alienated the supporters of his enemy promising them due consideration, and he always honoured such promises. In short, Zorawar successfully tried to weaken and demoralise the enemy before making an attack, and by further alienating his people and friends created possibilities of defeating him in detail. After defeating them he befriended them and used them to further his interests.

But the success of all these diplomatic transactions of the General depended on the efficient internal administration of his camp and campaign. Firstly, he made adequate provisions for meeting needs of his soldiers according to climate and surroundings. They were supplied with adequate clothing in winter in the form of leather trousers and jackets made of sheepskins. To provide shelter tentage was carried and temporary hutments were raised wherever possible. Small forts

were constructed at convenient distances to secure successive bases to fall back upon in event of reverses and to station garrisons to strengthen means of communications. He seldom destroyed shelters and houses and even repaired buildings and monasteries in Western Tibet where he also built the strong fort of Chi-tang. Tents made of Yak hair were provided to the army in Ladakh, Baltistan and Tibet, about 150 to each infantry battalion.

The soldiers were provided country-made match-lock or percussion-cap type guns, gun-powder and grape. Probably, the 'Par-mar' brand of rifles, devised by Gulab Singh himself, and had a longer range was used by the Dogra infantry. In addition, every soldier carried a sword, a dagger, lances and shield. Locally cast mountain guns weighing about 4 to 5 maunds which could be dismantled into smaller parts, were carried either by men or beasts. If men had to do the carriage job some twelve to fifteen were required. However, 4 or 5 animals could carry a stripped gun to the usual heights achieved by Zorawar's army. Field and garrison guns were manufactured at Jammu and Kishtwar. The artillery units were fully equipped with bags of powder, iron and stone balls and fusiliers in required quantity. Each soldier was provided some ten pounds of grape shot. Percussion-caps were issued in the quantity of fifty per weapon. Almost all the ammunition was manufactured locally at Kishtwar and Jammu. Gun-powder was made even in Ladakh and in Tibetan territory by the experts who accompanied the General's force. This explosive material was used for the usual purposes of tunnelling, mining and clearing roads.

Rations were carried by men on their backs. The normal ration consisted of parched barley flour (Sattu) and parched gram and gur. Any locally available grain was ground into flour as for example 'girm' in Ladakh. Such grain was ground in the hand-mills which each unit carried.

For the carriage of bulk rations and heavier material proper provision was made. Soldiers were trained to carry about a maund of load on their back, usually in skins. Local labour and ponies were used for carrying bulks, tentage and stores. Zorawar usually paid wages to the labour and pony-men for carrying load. Beasts of burden were required in large numbers. His artillery alone required ponies and yaks to the number of at least a thousand, for carrying guns and ammunition. An equally large number of labourers were also required for the job. His Commissariat Department was responsible for arranging labour and ponies. Provision was made for medical aid in each unit to which a few Vaid, Hakims and Barbers were attached.



As Gulab Singh had been a military officer and jagirdar of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, so his army had been organised on the lines of the army of Lahore State. Gulab Singh even inducted some of the European Officers of Ranjit's Army like Gardner and Honigberger into his Military system. Zorawar continued the same system of army organisation with necessary local modifications. Incidentally, it was based on the European principles as had been introduced in Ranjit's Army by Generals Ventura, Avitabile, Allard and others. In Zorawar's system Infantry was the main arm, as cavalry was impossible of use in the mountains. Of course, in lower hills cavalry was also used. A Company consisted of one hundred men and was commanded by a Subedar. It was subdivided into two platoons of fifty men each, commanded by Jemadars. A platoon had five sections of ten men each which were commanded by a Havildar. Eight companies formed an Infantry Battalion which was commanded by a Kumedan i.e., Commandant, assisted by an Assistant Kumedan. A Bakshi performed the duties of the Adjutant. An Infantry Battalion had the following establishment :— A Pandit ; a Hakim or Vaid ; a Surgeon ; Munshis or Clerks ; a Musadi or Accountant ; Artisans like Blacksmiths, Cobblers, Carpenters ; Cooks, Masalchis and Water Carriers ; Dak Orderly ; Mates and Coolies ; Transport personnel.

Cavalry was also organised on the pattern of Infantry. Each Sowar provided his own horse and carried a sword, a shield and a lance and a match-lock. Zorawar used hill ponies for the purpose which were habituated to ascents and descents and the mountain climatic and geographical conditions.

Artillery regiments were similarly organised. Each regiment had ten pieces of guns. Each gun was under a Jemandar and had a crew of eight. Each gun could be broken into 4 pieces of 200 pounds each and were usually carried by ponies. The average range of these guns was between 800 to 1,200 yards. There were at least three types of guns with varying size and capacity—garrison, field and swivels mortars.

Zorawar's army was composed on secular principles. His commanders and men included both Hindus and Muslims. He recruited from all martial classes of Jammu, Kangra, Chamba, Kishtwar, Riasi which formed the core of his army—the Dogra who were selected for their endurance, that is, who could climb a steep hill carrying a maund of load and could handle his weapons effectively at the end of the climb. To this he added recruits from Ladakh and Kashmir. In a list of 106 prisoners of his army repatriated from Tibet in 1857 some 30 are Muslim soldiers, out of which 11 were from Kashmir,

## APPENDIX A

Copy of murasila from the '*Sahib Kalan Bahadur*' (the British Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, Lahore) to Maharaja Gulab Singh, preserved in Government Archival Repository, Jammu, Persian Records File No. 139, for the year 1855-57.

(The letter, translated below by the author, bears upon the repatriation of 106 soldiers of the Dogra Army of General Zorawar Singh, who were taken prisoner by Lhasa Authorities in the battles of Taklakot and Toyo, fought in December, 1841.)

Murasila from the '*Sahib Kalan Bahadur*,' dated 1st January, 1857.

"Kind Maharaja Sahib and true friend. Peace be on him. Let it be known to that heart, glorifying in friendship, that previously also a few letters, regarding those persons who had been taken prisoners by the Tibetan Authorities in the battle of Wazir Zorawar Singh, have been written. Now a letter, No. 24, dated 7 December of the last year, has been received from Major Ramsy, Resident in Nepal, conveying the subject that while contracting agreement with the Government of Nepal a clause on the repatriation of the prisoners was also added. Accordingly, out of all the said prisoners only 106 persons first arrived Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Of these 56 persons agreed to return to their homes in the territories of the Manaraja Sahib. These people, therefore, left Kathmandu on the first December, and will go to Kashmir via Benaras and Delhi. Out of the remaining forty-five flatly refused to return to Kashmir. They have married in Tibet and have families there. They, therefore, went back to Tibet. The remaining five died when they arrived at Kathmandu. In addition to these there are another.....persons in Tibet, of whom three have been appointed to the office of 'Sardari' in the Tibetan Government.

It is learnt that 13 additional unknown persons accompany those who are going to Kashmir. One of these is accompanied by a Bhutani lady who is his wife, and she did not agree to separate from her husband. The list of the names of all those persons who go to Kashmir, went back to Tibet, or died, or are still left behind in Tibet, is enclosed herewith.

190 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

The expenses on their repatriation and conveyance have been incurred as given below :—

Travelling expenses at the rate of.....were given to those who ultimately left for Kashmir. The Bhutani lady was given.....Travelling given to those who went back to Tibet.....

With the addition of what the Nepal Darbar spent for bringing them to Kathmandu from Tibet, the whole expenditure amounts to Rs. 1,770 and 14 annas. The Maharaja Sahib Bahadur may kindly remit this amount to this Department.

Written on the 1st January, 1857.

**APPENDIX B**

**MINUTE BY THE HON'BLE THE LIEUTENANT-  
GOVERNOR, NORTH-WEST PROVINCE DATED  
MEERUT, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1841.**

1. Though the letters, of which copies are appended, are in a private form, I still consider it proper to bring them on record, because they are replies to a public despatch dated 23rd, received by me in duplicate at this station on the evening of the 26th instant from Mr. Lushington, the Commissioner in Kumaon.

2. The original despatch has gone to Agra whence a copy has doubtless been ere this transmitted to Calcutta.

3. The following item of intelligence communicated by Mr. Batten, the Senior Assistant, since the departure of Lushington for the frontier, strike me, as being of sufficient importance to warrant my transferring them from the pages of a private correspondence to a more public document and thus bringing them officially to the knowledge of the Government of India.

4. Mr. Batten's notes commenced on the 18th instant, the date of Lushington's departure from Almorah and the 24th is the date of the latest that I have received. The substance of their contents is as follows :

*5. Zorawar Singh is daily increasing his force at Tuklakote, and evidently intends to winter there having collected from the stores of the people of the country, grain enough to support his army and render him for this year independent of our trade.*

*6. His party at that post is understood to have been lately increased, but is not thought to exceed seven or eight hundred Sikhs with a rabble of some thousand Ladakhis.*

7. The general belief among the Hoonias is, that the Goorkhas now 1,200 strong, it is said at Yaree, their frontier post in Joomla, intend to come to an understanding with the Sikhs, though this is retarded by dispute, as to with whom is to rest the right of taxing the Joomla Bhotias of the Hoomla Pass, neither party likely to concede it to the other.

8. Letters have gone to Joomla and thence to Nepal, but it is not known whether any reply has reached Zorawar Singh, who is said to give out that he is on most friendly terms with the British Government, but that he will not relinquish his right as successor to the Chinese Government in Tibet.

9. It is commonly thought that it is the intention of the Sikhs to establish a communication by a chain of small forts between Ladakh and Nepal and that to this the Goorkhas will readily assent.

10. On the 10th instant three armed sowars entered our territory by the Beans Pass to demand restoration of some Sikh horses alleged to have been brought down by some refugee Hooniah and sold to our Bhotias.

11. *A verbal altercation ensued and the Sikhs retired to Tuklakote, speaking in a vaunting strain and naming Zorawar Singh as a chief, the equal of any English Governor-General.*

12. *On the 21st instant, a report arrived from Beans stating that Zorawar Singh had sent a hukamnamah signed by himself directing the Bhotias to pay the revenue due to Tibet of which he had become ruler by conquest or to stand the consequences.*

13. Neither the Bhotias, nor the public officers who furnish the report had the presence of mind to secure the messenger or what would have been better, the paper of which he was the bearer.

14. Upto the 15th instant small parties of armed sowars still continued to enter the Beans pass, and it was reported at Almorah on the 21st September, that a detachment of 300 mounted men had gone to demand tribute of the Bhotias of the Jawahir pass.

15. Whether this is correct or not, is not yet known but on the 19th instant, a Chinese Officer was Officially reported to have appeared at Jawahir on the part of Zorawar Singh to warn the refugee Hooniah to repair to their houses on pain of being pursued.

16. It is believed that the Hooniahs have told Zorawar Singh that the passes belong to the Chinese and not to the British Government, a pretension, once before advanced and settled by Mr. Traill, who went up and fixed the crest of the passes as the line of demarcation between Kumaon and Hoondes.

17. *Zorawar Singh is said in compliance with orders conveyed in a letter from, Rajah Goolab Singh, whom he styles his 'malik' or*

*Lord to have released 1,200 sheep, and 20 men of a place called Mechun, (I presume in our territory), whom he had detained at Taklakote, but it is not yet known, whether he has compelled these men to pay a fine of 500 rupees which he formerly demanded as the price of their discharge.*

18. Such are the leading particulars of the intelligence received from Almorah, intelligence that may be severely relied on as coming through one as thoroughly conversant with the language and character of the people who furnish it as Mr. Batten, and which goes for to verify an opinion expressed, *if I am not mistaken, so long since as in 1837 by Sir C. Wade that the Rulers of the Punjab would extend their dominion in the regions of Chinese Tartary till it should touch that of Nepal.*

19. To this junction, I have ever expressed my own suspicions that all their recent-advances along our frontier, their occupation of Mandi, invasion of Kooloo, and demonstration against Bussahir have directly tended, and if such a junction be allowed to acquire strength and consistency, I cannot but think that the tranquillity and prosperity of Kumaon will be thereby grievously and durably affected.

20. It is clear from the many passages in the intelligence that it is in the protection to be afforded by us as a duty of humanity to parties flying from tyranny and rapacity of the invaders that the main risk of collision at present exists.

21. *Zorawar Singh's name is notorious for cruelty, and it is no uncharitable conclusion that of such a character arrogance is also a pretty prominent attribute—the one quality will drive many to seek refuge in our dominions, the other will urge him to demand their surrender and when that fails, to resort to outrage in vindication of what to his savage mind will appear his natural right. Thus protected jarring to end in open hostility would seem to be the most likely consequence of the occupation of Tibet by the delegate of the virtual Rulers of the Punjab, even if the intruder stood alone, and not in a position, where he must gravitate towards an alliance with that state, which while it longs to recover Kumaon is known to look upon that province, as the quarter in which we are most vulnerable.*

22. In this opinion of the Goorkhas my own slight acquaintance with the localities of the province inclines me strongly to concur.

23. Indeed if it be considered that Kumaon while open throughout the year, to the invasion from the east, is cut off by the intervention of the pestilential belt of the Turæe from all military communi-

cation with the plains during at least five months of the summer and autumn, it must at once be seen how exposed to insult and injury it must at those seasons be.

24. These circumstances of its position do not escape the notice either of the people of Kumaon or of their former Rulers, nor will they, we may rely upon it, be overlooked in the connection, now drawing on between the most wealthy and the most warlike of our independent neighbours.

25. For this year all may soon be settled by the snow which generally closes the easiest of the passes, that by Beans by the 20th October, *but as the security thence derived will be mutual, Zorawar Singh if suffered to remain where he is, will have nearly 5 months in which to cement alliances and digest and mature his plans for the future annoyance of the people of Kumaon.*

Meerut

28th September, 1841.

Sd/-

T. C. Robertson.

(Secret Proceedings of the Foreign Department, 11 October, 1841,  
No. 50—National Archives of India, New Delhi.)

## APPENDIX C

**TRANSLATION OF A TREATY OF PEACE AND AMITY  
CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND SIKHS,  
SUBSEQUENTLY TO THE DEATH OF WUZEER  
ZORAWAR SINGH, SIGNED BY KALON ZORKUND  
ON THE PART OF THE FORMER, AND RUTNOO  
WUZEER AND DEWAN HURRY CHAND ON THE  
PART OF THE LATTER.**

The following chiefs here in assembled in the city of Le on *the 28th Assuge, 1890 Sumbut*, corresponding with *17th October, 1842*, viz. Kaloon Zorkund and Dewar Jeesy on the part of the Chinese, and Shah Gholam on the part of the Ruler of Lahore, and Rutnoo Wuzeer and Hurry Chand on the part of Raja Goolab Singh besides others of inferior note belonging to both parties. It was mutually agreed, that a treaty of amity and peace should be concluded; between the Chinese and Seiks, the conditions of which as undermentioned were recorded in writing in the presence of the chiefs aforesaid, and likewise Sib Chu Tukpun Peesy, and Laumba Wuzeer both, confidential advisers of the Viceroy of Lhasa.

- Art. I That the boundaries of Ludak and Lhasa shall be constituted as formerly, the contracting parties engaging to confine themselves within their respective boundaries, the one to refrain from any act of aggression on the other.
- Art. II That in conformity with ancient usage, tea, and Pusham shawl-wool shall be transmitted by the Ludak road.
- Art. III Such persons as may in future proceed from China to Ludak or from Ludak to China, not to be obstructed on the road.
- Art. IV That no renewal of the war between the chiefs of the Raja Goolab Singh and those of the Viceroy of Lhasa shall take place.
- Art. V That the above mentioned conditions shall remain in force without interruption, and whatever customs formerly existed, shall not be removed and continue to prevail.



**196 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories***

**Art. VI** It is understood that in signing the above treaty, the contracting parties are bound to a true and faithful observance of all the provisions thereof, by the solemn obligations attached to the Holy Place called "Geugri to the lake of Shanta Lari and to the Temple of Kojoon Cha in China."

**True Translation  
Sd/- J. C. Erskine,  
Political Agent,  
Subathu.**

**(Secret Consultations of the Foreign Department, 24 May, 1843,  
No. 62—National Archives of India, New Delhi.)**

## *APPENDIX D*

The Ladakhis sing the following song of Zorawar's wife, probably Asha Devi, who accompanied him to Tirathpuri on the Manasarovara and whom he sent back to Leh under military escort a short time before his last battle of Toyo.

I do not wish to eat bread received from the sinful northerners.  
I do not want to drink water received from the sinful northerners.  
Amidst the inhabitants of this land I have no friends and relations.  
In the northern plain I have no brothers and friends.  
In the place of friends and relations I had only Zorawar.  
In the place of brothers and friends I had only Zorawar.  
And it was only Zorawar who made me a despised widow.  
And it was only Zorawar who made his queen a despised widow.  
When arriving at the Zoji Pass, my father-land can be seen.  
When arriving on the Zoji Pass, Lahore and the Panjab can be seen.  
Although I can see my fatherland, I shall not arrive there.  
Although I can see my fatherland, Zorawar's queen will not arrive there.

## APPENDIX E

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## INDEX

- Abdalis of Kabul, 38  
Abu-Sayed-Kashgiri Sultan, 67  
Acchan Jot, 154, 155  
Achah-Gonpa, 157  
Adenanugur, 52  
Afghan, 28, 74, 111, 148, 150, 181  
Afghanistan, 105, 117, 179  
Aghar Khan, 39  
Ahmad Khan Balti, 87, 98  
Ahmad Shah Durrani, 36, 49, 71, 72, 90  
Ahmad Shah, Last Chief of Balti, 71, 98, 99, 146, 162  
Ahmad Shah, Raja of Skardu, 89-94, 100, 101, 133, 157  
Akbar, 27-30  
Akbat Mahmud Sultan, Tsepal, 80, 87  
Akhnur, 19, 33, 34, 36, 38, 52  
Aklu, 36  
Ali-Mardan-Khan, 31  
Ali-Mir-Khan, 68  
Ali Mohammad, son of Mohammad Shah, 134  
Ali Shah Chak, 48  
Ali Sher, father of Ahmad Shah, the Chief of Balti, 71, 96, 100, 101, 161  
Allard, General, 188  
Almans, 31  
Almora, 137, 146, 147, 169, 171, 175  
Ambans, 64, 115  
Amluk Singh, Raja, 49  
Amritpal, raja of Basohli, 36  
Amir Timur, 18, 27  
Amir of Sind, 105  
Amir-ul-Umara, 31  
Anand Pal, 24  
Ananta king, 25  
Anglo-Nepali War, 178  
Anglo-Chinese Negotiations, 165  
Anglo-Sikh War, friendship, 41, 180  
Anrudah, 28  
Anti-English, 108  
Aqubat Khan, 69  
Arabs, 65, 66  
Asata, Rulers of Champa, son of lord of Balaor, 17, 18, 26  
Asia, Central, Western, 65, 66, 103, 105, 116, 139  
Askot, 137, 146, 162  
Astor, 89, 100-102, 162  
Atak fort, 39  
Attock, 37, 150  
Aurangzeb, Alamgir, Prince, 29, 31, 34, 48, 69, 71  
Avitabile, general, 188  
Avtar Dev, son of raja Bhoj Dev of Jammu, 23  
Awtara Kishtwaria, Aitwara, 128  
Aziz-ud-din, Fakir, 170  
Babbapura, 17, 18, 26, 27  
Babor, 18  
Babu, raja of Jasrota, 29  
Badakh Shan, 31  
Badrinath temple, 118, 123  
Bahadur Khan Kargalwala, 153  
Bahadur Singh, ruler of Kishtwar, 48  
Bahu fort, 18, 19, 33, 34, 49

- Bahuwal, 34**  
**Baila, Babliana, 27**  
**Bakhtiar Khan, 48**  
**Bakht Mal, raja of Pathankot, 30**  
**Balaurias, 17, 48**  
**Balawar, Vallapura, Balor, 18, 22, 25, 33**  
**Balchun, 163**  
**Balde, 86**  
**Balibhadra, raja of Lakhanpur, 29**  
**Balkh, 31**  
**Balti Khan, 152**  
**Baltistan, Balti, 40, 46, 53, 56, 58, 59, 65, 67, 68, 70-72, 88-96, 98, 100-103, 112, 115-120, 129, 133, 135, 137, 143, 146, 160, 161, 163, 164, 166, 176, 183-187**  
**Bamiyan, 31**  
**Bandralta, 19, 34, 35, 40, 46, 52**  
**Banganga, 20**  
**Banghal, 20, 32**  
**Banihal 36**  
**Banka-Kahlon, ban-kha-bkah-bzon 79, 80, 83, 87, 93, 94**  
**Bankhapa, 77, 102**  
**Barakot, 146**  
**Barakzai brothers, 105**  
**Bara-Lacha rang, 60**  
**Bartula, 25**  
**Basgo, 69**  
**Basohli, 17, 19, 26, 30, 34-39, 48, 53**  
**Bashahr, 35, 63, 69, 115, 117, 120, 125, 137, 138, 160, 167, 171-176**  
**Basti Ram Mehta 42, 75-77, 80, 96, 97, 123, 125, 128, 131, 132, 135, 136, 146, 147, 163**  
**Basu, raja of Mau-Paithan, 28, 30**  
**Bazgo, 61, 79-81, 87, 93, 120, 128, 134**  
**Beol, 39, 46**
- Bengal, 73**  
**Bhadarwah, 19, 33, 35, 36, 39, 47, 51, 52, 68**  
**Bhadri-dkar-pass, 60**  
**Bhadu Balor, 19, 33, 35, 39**  
**Bhagwan Singh, 48, 102, 146, 162**  
**Bhalai, 34**  
**Bhandian, 39, 46**  
**Bhangis, 37**  
**Bhau Singh, second son of raja Jagat Singh, 31, 32**  
**Bhawan, 24**  
**Bhawani Dass, Diwan, 38**  
**Bhimber, 19, 36, 39, 40**  
**Bhikshachara, son of raja Boja, 26**  
**Bhimdev Shahi, 23, 25, 27**  
**Bhim Garh, 44**  
**Bhimkot, 21**  
**Bhoti, Bhotias, 19, 33, 46, 52, 62, 82, 97, 125**  
**Bhoj Dev, raja of Jammu, 23**  
**Bhoja, king of Kashmir, 26**  
**Bhows, 39**  
**Bhupdev, raja of Jammu, 29, 34**  
**Bhupdev, Mian, 44**  
**Bhupat Pal Singh, raja of Basohli, 48, 102**  
**Bhup Singh Mian, 39**  
**Bhuri Singh Museum Chamba, 35**  
**Bhumi Chand, 21**  
**Bhuvan Chander, 22**  
**Bias, 20, 27, 32, 36**  
**Bidi Chand, raja of Kangra, 28**  
**Bilhana, 25**  
**Birbal Dhar, 51**  
**Bir Singh, raja of Nurpur, 30, 38**  
**Bishu fort, 162**  
**Biyans, British pargana, 169, 175**  
**Bkra-sis-diban-phyang, 75, 76**  
**Bonjua, 49**  
**Boti, Ladakhi, 76, 159, 175**

206 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

- Bot-Pa, 54  
Brij Dev, Ranjit Dev's successor, 36, 37  
British, Governor-General, 37, 40, 41, 50, 57, 63, 71-73, 78, 84, 90-92, 103-115, 117, 118, 123, 130-135, 137, 140, 141, 145-148, 150-152, 157-160, 164-182, 186  
British-Indian Territories, 125  
Buddhist, Buddhism, 54, 67, 68, 69, 120, 133  
Burdwan range, 47  
Burma, 117, 179  
  
Caliph of Baghdad, 66  
Chachot, Chu-sod, 79, 84  
Chain Singh Miān, 52  
Chakki river, 31, 32  
Chamba, Champa, 17-19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 30, 32-37, 50, 51, 60, 188  
Chand-La, 60  
Chander Bhaga, valley, river, 25, 26, 58, 60  
Chandra Gupta Maurya, 46  
Changa, 21  
Chang-Pass, 62  
Chang-Nabdan, 87, 134  
Chang-Raftan, Raphtan, 81, 128  
Chaprang, 63  
Chang-Tang, north-west Tibet, 172  
Chan-Thang, 57, 63, 69, 70, 114, 115  
Chatargarh, 34, 60, 86  
Chatar Singh, 34  
Cheche-Thung, 95, 96  
Check, 44  
Chelong-Suru, stream, 161  
Che-moor Gyalpo, 163  
Chenab river, valley, 19, 35, 38, 39, 47, 52, 55, 58, 60  
Chenani, 19, 34, 40, 46, 52  
Chhak-jot, Bakshi, 154, 155  
Chhanajung village, 154  
Chhobar Kher, 145  
Chiang-nor, 136  
Chiapons 127  
Chiapon-chi-pu-pa. 156  
Chibs, 39  
Chibhal, 40  
Chibra, 57, 119  
Chie-mei-Pa, The Tibetan officer of the Taklakot military post, 136  
Chigtan, 87, 101  
Chinese, China, Tartary, 54, 55, 59, 63-66, 70, 102, 104, 106, 113-115, 117, 119, 121, 122, 124, 130, 137, 140-142, 145, 148-153, 156-159, 165, 166, 168, 169, 171, 176, 177, 179, 181  
Chipki, 137  
Chirag-Ali, wazir, 90  
Chi-T'ang fort, 118, 128-131, 136, 137, 140, 187  
Chitral, 68  
Chogsprul, 84  
Chorbad, 68  
Chorbat Pass, 94, 98, 100, 102  
Chovang Nabdan, Tse-dban-rab-bartan, 79  
Chu-msu, Dokthal, 127  
Chumurti, 54, 59, 115, 120, 124  
Chung-ren-pa, 127  
Chuni Lal, Lala, Vakil, 175  
Churitt, 120, 124  
Chushul, 62, 114, 121  
  
Da, 96  
Dada, 32, 121  
Daghanullah, 145  
Dalai Lama, 64, 69, 70, 115, 117, 160  
Dalel Singh, son of Raghunath Singh, 35, 85  
Dalpatpur, 20, 32

- Dansal, 46  
 Dara Shikoh, 31  
 Darband, 150  
 Dards, 96, 97  
 Darkech, Darkyed, 79  
 Darvabhisara hill, 25, 27  
 Datar Chand, 32  
 Datarpur, 20, 32  
 Daulat Ali Khan of Khaplu, 98, 99, 102, 146, 162  
 Daya Ram Munshi, 83  
 Deba, 64, 138-140  
 De-den-nam-gyal, 68, 70  
 Dcenu Jamadar, 163  
 Deleg-Nam-gyal, 117  
 Delek-nam-gyal, 70  
 Delhi, 27-29, 34, 37, 48, 49, 71  
 Deodhiwala, Lord Chamberlain, 52  
 Deoly, 46  
 Deva Batala, 38, 39  
 Dev-Sai plain, 161  
 Dhameri, 27, 30  
 Dhamriwal, 28  
 Dhar-Udhampur Road, 18  
 Dhihdawal, Didwal, 28  
 Dhian Singh, Raja, Dogra, 40, 42, 52, 72, 82, 105, 107-112, 131, 150, 158, 169-171, 175, 181  
 Dhruv Dev, Raja, 29, 35  
 Dial Chand, Raja of Cheneni, 52  
 Dido Mian, 38-40  
 Di-Gi-nam-gyal, 69  
 Diwan Singh Mian, 38, 39, 44, 45  
 Dkar-Rtse, Kartse, 75, 76  
 Dnos-grub-bstan-hdzin, 79, 93  
 Doab, 37  
 Doda, 47, 52  
 Doghoni-pa-bono, The wazir of the raja of Iskardu 99,162  
 Dog-pacha, 123, 184  
 Dogra, army, state, hills, family, brothers, soldiers, generals, raja, Maharaja, officers, chiefs ... .. Sin-pa, Shen-pa ... .., 17-19, 23-27, 29, 31, 34, 36-39, 41, 42, 46, 50, 53, 54, 57, 60-62, 69, 71, 74, 75, 77-81, 83-85, 87-89, 91, 93-95, 97-104, 107, 108, 112, 114, 118, 119, 121-124, 126-146, 150, 152-158, 160-169, 171-174, 176-182, 184, 185, 187, 188  
 Dost Muhammad Khan, Amir of Kabul, 105  
 Dras river, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 69, 78, 94, 146, 153, 161, 163  
 Drag chos, 85  
 Drangtse, 155  
 Dulu Singh Mian, The Dogra officer, 176  
 East India company, 57, 77, 117, 172, 176, 179  
 English, empire, 100, 111, 112, 146, 164, 165  
 European officers, 88, 91, 188  
 Fa-Hian, 54  
 Firoz Tughlak, 26, 27  
 Fateh Singh Jogi, servant of Mihan Singh, 82  
 Fatteh Platoon, 144  
 Ga-Dan, 69  
 Gajai Dev, 29  
 Gajai Singh, 35  
 Gambo, 141  
 Gangri, 115  
 Ganskil, 63  
 Gapaju, Ga-Pa-To, 79  
 Gartokh, Gardokh, Ghertope, Garo, Garoo, 63, 64, 114, 115, 118-124, 128, 138-143, 148, 151, 165, 167, 168, 178, 179, 184

- Gar-Gono, 94  
 Garh-Dhamala, 39  
 Garhwal, 125  
 Garphon, 114, 115, 117, 121  
 Gaur-Bengal, ruling family, 48  
 Gazani, 21, 25  
 Gelums, 63  
 Gheo, 176  
 Ghiasud-din, Sultan, 27  
 Ghorband, 31  
 Ghulam Hasan, 94, 96-98  
 Ghulam Hussain, 94, 100, 101  
 Giapo-Cho, Raja of Timbus, 74  
 Gilgit, 40, 65, 101, 102, 104, 114, 148, 165  
 Gobind Ram Bhas, 112  
 Gola, Gol, 79, 98-100  
 Gonpa Chamra, 154, 155  
 Graphan, 62, 64  
 Guge, 67-69, 115  
 Gujarat, Gujrat, 36  
 Gulab-Garh, 86  
 Gulabnamah, 164  
 Gulab Singh Maharaja, 39-49, 51-53, 57, 71-75, 78, 80, 82, 83, 85, 88, 91, 92, 102-108, 110-117, 125, 131, 134, 139, 142, 145-151, 155, 157, 158, 160, 161, 164-167, 169-173, 175-177, 179, 181, 187, 188  
 Gulam Khan, Deposed chief of Baltistan, 120, 121, 123, 129, 133  
 Guler, 20, 30, 32-35  
 Gummand Chand Katoch, Raja, 36  
 Guran Ditta, 138, 144, 154  
 Gurjara, Gujarat, in the west Panjab, 22  
 Gurkhas, 38, 64, 114, 115, 130, 148, 177  
 Gurmukh Singh Bhai, 112  
 Gupta or Pre-Gupta Age, 17  
 Gur Singh, Raja of Kishtwar, 48  
 Guru-Lama, 65  
 Gwalior, 32  
 Gyalpo of Ladakh, 57, 62, 80, 81, 83, 84, 87, 88, 90, 92-94, 143, 144, 164, 185, 186  
 Haider Khan, Kachu, 98, 100, 146, 160-162  
 Hamid Khan Kakar, Afghan Governor of Malot, 28, 30  
 Hamza-Gond, 98  
 Hanle river, 59, 68  
 Hano-La, 98  
 Hanu, 94  
 Haridwar, 43  
 Hari Chand, Diwan, 4?, 62, 150, 151, 153-156, 161  
 Hari Chand, Raja of Nagarkot, 32  
 Hari Dev, 29, 34  
 Hari Pur, 20, 150  
 Har Pola, 163  
 Harun-la-rashid, 66  
 Hashmat Ullah Khan, 51, 97, 98  
 Hazara, 146  
 Hemachandra, 21  
 Hem-Babs or Snow Fed, 55, 59, 80  
 Hemis, 120, 140  
 Hgyur-Med, 80  
 Himachal Pradesh, 43, 54, 57  
 Himalayas, Himalayan, Territory, Western, Inner, 17, 19, 41, 46, 53, 54, 58-60, 71, 91, 104, 106, 114, 137, 146, 147, 152, 165, 166, 176, 179, 182.  
 Hindu, States, Shahi, Kingdom, 19, 22-25, 37, 60, 105, 124, 176  
 Hindu Kush, 31, 182  
 Hindustan, 63, 109  
 Hira Singh, Raja, 40  
 Hiuen-Tsang, 21  
 Hiun-Des, 62  
 Honigberger, 188

- Hoshiara, General, 42  
Hsi-Tsang-Tsou-Shu, Tibetan Memorial and Reports, 122  
Hsueh-Shan, Mount Kailash, 122  
Humayun, 28  
Hunias, 135  
Hunza, 65  
Hussain Khan, 163
- Imam Quli Khan, son of Sulaiman Khan, Raja, 162  
Inayatullah Singh, 49  
Inder Chandra, lord of Jalandhara, 26  
India, Indian, Army, Troops, History, Soldiers, Government, Northern, 17, 26, 28, 31, 37, 46, 55, 60, 92, 104, 105, 108, 110, 114, 117, 134, 165, 167, 173, 176, 177, 179, 182-184  
Indus, 18, 19, 23, 54, 56-58, 60, 61, 83, 89, 92, 95-97, 101, 104, 119, 121, 148-150, 154, 156, 161, 165  
Indo-Tibetan trade, 173  
Islam religion, 31, 48  
Islam Shah Sur, 30  
Ismailpur, 46  
Izzat-ullah, 61, 72
- Jabbar Khan, Raja of Astor, 100-102, 163  
Jacquemont, French traveller visited Kashmir, 90  
Jagat Singh, raja of Nurpur, 30, 31, 33  
Jagat Singh, ruler of Kishtwar, 48  
Jagdish Chand, 24, 28  
Jahangir, 27, 29, 30, 48  
Jain Khan Koka, 29  
Jaipal Shahi, 23
- Jai-pon, General, 122  
Jai Singh, raja of Kishtwar, 48  
Jalalabad, 106, 179, 181  
Jalandhara or Trigarta, Doab, 19-21, 26, 28, 32  
Jalim Singh Rana, 75  
Jammu, Durgara, Dugar, Hills, States, Rajas, 1, 7, 18-19, 22, 23, 26-30, 32-42, 44, 45, 47, 149-53, 57, 60, 61, 72, 74, 81-83, 85, 87, 92, 102, 110-114, 118, 134, 138, 142, 144, 147-152, 158, 162-165, 167, 168, 172, 176, 177, 184, 185, 187, 188  
Jamwal family, 40  
Jam-wang-Nam-gyal, 68  
Jangalwar, 47, 51  
Janguri, San-ku-Ri, 77  
Jasrota, 19, 27, 29, 33-35, 37-40  
Jasata, 26  
Jaskar, 154  
Jasrath, Khokhar leader, 28  
Jaswan, 20, 28, 32  
Jaswant Singh Rana, 43  
Jawala Sahai, Diwan, 42, 147, 148  
Jehlum, 19, 33, 36, 74  
Jethpal, 29, 32  
Jigsmad Namgyal, 102, 143, 160  
Jit Singh Raja, 38  
Jupons, 127  
Jwala, 28
- Kabul, 23, 24, 31, 38, 71, 105, 106, 110, 112, 116, 146, 148, 181  
Kafchun stream, 161  
Kahanpal, raja of Solar race, 48  
Kahlon, King, 72, 73, 131, 136, 145  
Kahlur, Bilaspur, 28, 34-36, 43  
Kailas Pal, 29

- Kailash range, Tisi, Kangari, Kan-Tisi, Mount, 58, 63, 66, 115, 119, 124, 127, 184, 185**  
**Kainthi, 49**  
**Kala-Pani, in Byans district of Kumaon, 125**  
**Kalasa, king of Kashmīr, 18, 26, 52**  
**Kali river, 135**  
**Kamaon, 19, 67, 105, 118, 120, 123, 125, 130, 135, 137, 147**  
**Kanauj, 19**  
**Kanawar, 60, 63, 115, 118, 167, 168**  
**Kanawari, 173**  
**Kanda, 18**  
**Kandi, 31**  
**Kangra, Trigarta, 17-29, 32-36, 111, 188**  
**Kanji river, 61**  
**Kan-hiyas, 37**  
**Kan-ra-mi-mu-na, a place near Toyo, 132**  
**Kansu, 67**  
**Karakoram, 54, 57, 58**  
**Karkat, 161**  
**Karam Dev, 33**  
**Kardam Khar, 128**  
**Karguil, Kargal, Kargil, 59, 61, 76, 87, 88, 153, 161, 163**  
**Karding, 121**  
**Karnali river, 115**  
**Karnsha, 154, 155**  
**Kartaksha, 96, 97, 100, 161, 162**  
**Kartse-Suru, 145**  
**Karzo, 81**  
**Karzu-Bagh, 144**  
**Kashgar, 67, 103, 104**  
**Kashmir, valley, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 26, 39, 34, 39-41, 47-50, 53-55, 57, 59, 61-63, 65-75, 82-84, 90-92, 102, 111, 112, 115, 145, 147, 149, 150, 153-155, 164, 166, 170, 172, 173, 188**  
**Kashtwar, Kishtwar, Kashthavata, 18, 19, 29, 34-36, 39, 40, 43, 45-54, 60, 72, 75, 78, 82, 89, 118, 157, 161, 163, 185, 187, 188**  
**Kathmandu, 118, 123, 168, 178, 179**  
**Katoch, family, 21, 26-28, 32, 33, 36, 38**  
**Kaurvas, 21**  
**Kazim Beg, 146**  
**Kesra Singh, 169, 170, 175**  
**Khaibar pass, 111, 148-150, 181**  
**Khalatse, 85**  
**Khalashi, 154**  
**Khallach bridge, 61**  
**Khalsa, kingdom, 74, 106, 109, 112, 113, 158, 160, 170**  
**Khan-i-Jahan, Akbar's general, 27**  
**Khapalu, 68, 69, 94, 95, 98, 99, 102, 143, 146, 162**  
**Kha-pan-cha, or snow land, 54**  
**Kharak Singh, prince, 38, 164**  
**Kharbu, Mkhar-bu, 80**  
**Khardung, 102, 122, 123, 129, 130**  
**Khari, Khariali, 19**  
**Kharmang, 94, 98, 101, 102**  
**Khar-Poche, 99, 146, 161, 162**  
**Kharoti, 171**  
**Khartaksha, 89**  
**Khataochau, 95**  
**Khattai, on the Balti border, 90**  
**Khojan Bhunjan, wazir, 75**  
**Khokhar, 27, 28**  
**Khorasan, 171**  
**Khost, 31**  
**Khotan, Khoten, 54, 104, 163**  
**Khurram, prince, 30**  
**Khurram Khan, raja of Kurrus, 146, 162**  
**Khussal Singh, Jamandar, 112**

- Kil-Chha, 54**  
**Kila-Suru-Kursi, 76**  
**Kinnaur upper, 69**  
**Kira, 17, 18, 22**  
**Kiragram or Baijnath, Vaidya Nath, 20**  
**Kirat Singh, raja of Kishtwar, 48**  
**Kirpa Ram, Sikh governor of Kashmir, Dewan, 51, 90**  
**Kirti, 18, 26**  
**Kohli, 153**  
**Kotli, 19**  
**Kuluts, Kuluta, Kulu, 18, 22, 32, 50, 54, 57, 60, 67, 69, 70, 120, 153, 176**  
**Kumaon, 166, 168, 171, 172, 174, 178**  
**Kurali, 20**  
**Kurrus, 94, 99, 100, 146, 162**  
**Kurukshetra, 124**  
**Kussal, Khashal, 45**  
**Kwardu, 146**  
**Kyang, 59**  
  
**Labrang, 154**  
**Ladakh, La-dvags, 40, 43, 46, 47, 53-60, 62-65, 67-85, 87, 89, 90, 93, 94, 99, 101-104, 107, 112, 114-118, 120-122, 124-128, 133, 135, 138, 140-145, 147-157, 159-161, 163, 164, 166-168, 171-178, 180, 181, 183-188**  
**Lahul, 33, 54-60, 66, 67, 69, 70, 84, 176**  
**Lahore, Darbar, State, 23, 24, 28-30, 38, 41, 42, 50, 52, 71, 82, 92, 103, 105-114, 117, 135, 139, 141, 145, 150, 158-160, 164-167, 169-171, 174, 175, 177-180, 188**  
**Lakhpat Rai, wazir, Diwan, Kishtwaria, 42, 49, 51, 161-163**  
**Lakhanpur, 19, 29, 33-35**  
  
**Lala-Chobara, 39, 46**  
**Lal dev, ruler of Kishtwar, 49**  
**Lalliya Shahi, 23**  
**Lamas or Monks, 54, 63, 115**  
**Lama-yuru, Bla-ma-gyu-ru, Gyum-drum, 61, 80-82 .**  
**Lang-Kartse, 77**  
**Lang-kanchu, Lang-Korchu of Basti Ram and Lang-Makhar-rtse of Chronicles, 80**  
**Lapu-Lekh, 137**  
**Lapchak or Lopchak, 70**  
**Lce-Mbre, 143**  
**Ldum-Ra, 76, 143, 179**  
**Leh, 56, 57, 59-62, 66, 69, 70, 72, 75, 76, 78, 80-85, 87, 93, 102, 114, 119, 121, 123, 131, 132, 138, 140-145, 153-155, 157, 158, 160, 174, 185**  
**Lehna Singh Majithia, 112**  
**Lha-Chen-Bha-Gan, 67**  
**Lhasa, authorities, 64-66, 69, 70, 85, 102, 114-117, 119, 121, 122, 126-131, 133-135, 138, 139, 141-145, 149, 151, 152, 156, 158-160, 167-173, 174, 178, 179, 184**  
**Lop-chhak, 142**  
**Lo-tro-chok-den, 66, 67**  
**Lohara, 17**  
**Lord Auckland, Governor-General, 169**  
**Lubrah, 154**  
**Ludhiana, 50, 78, 92, 137, 158**  
**Lung-kartse, 59, 79, 80**  
**Lung-wu (klum-gyogma, in the Ladakhi chronicals), 155**  
  
**Mabah, 154**  
**Ma-di-na-sa, Madin Shah, Mohiuddin-Shah, 94, 101**  
**M-gon-po, 120**



## 212 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories*

- Maha Singh, son of Bhagwan Singh of Kishtwar, 48**  
**Mahdi, 101**  
**Mahabharata, 21, 24, 124**  
**Mahmud of Ghazni, 21, 23-25**  
**Majja Singh Commandant, 156**  
**Maldev, raja of Jammu, 27**  
**Malhu, 33**  
**Malfuzat-i-Timuri, 18**  
**Ma-lo-pho, or snow land, 54**  
**Malot, 28**  
**Malwa, 26**  
**Manasarowara, 63, 115, 121, 124, 132, 135, 152, 167, 184, 185**  
**Mandi, 33, 35, 36**  
**Mandhata, son of Rajrup, 31**  
**Magna Mian, Thanadar, 87, 132, 143, 145**  
**Mangyul, 58**  
**Man raja, Governor of Lahore, 29**  
**Manji, 77**  
**Mankot, 19, 33-35, 52**  
**Mansar, 27**  
**Manun village, 27**  
**Marmehti, in Doda, 43**  
**Marol, 94-96, 98**  
**Marwan, 97**  
**Mar-yum pass, 114**  
**Mar-yul, low or red land, 54**  
**Ma-Tsang, 128**  
**Matsyas, 21**  
**Mau-Kot, Nurpur-Pathankot State, Mau-Paithan, 28, 30, 32**  
**Mayum-pass, 56, 66-70, 116-119, 121-123, 125, 127, 128, 135**  
**Meng-pao, 122, 133, 156, 158.**  
**Mian Singh, a rude soldier, 92, 131**  
**Midphi Sata, 83**  
**Mihan Singh, Sikh governor of Kashmir, 82, 83**  
**Mihr Singh, Saidmand Khan, 49**  
**Mirbal pass, 50**  
**Mirpur, 36, 150**  
**Misra, 121, 124, 131, 155**  
**Missar, 184**  
**Mirza Haidar, Mughal general of Humayun, 48, 67**  
**Mohan Lal Colonel, 111**  
**Mongol, 62, 67, 69, 76**  
**Mor-tan-Chin, 157**  
**Moru-todzi, Dnos-grub-bstan-hdzin, 80, 83-88**  
**Mota Mian, 38**  
**Mubarak Shah, Sayyid ruler of Delhi, 27, 28**  
**Mughal, Governor, Court, super-macy, 1, 26, 27, 29-33, 35, 48, 68-71, 90, 182**  
**Muhammadan, Chief ships, Attack, invasion, 19, 20, 23, 26, 29, 30, 32, 48, 49, 129**  
**Muhammad-Ali-Chh-Khat-pa, wazir, commander, 161**  
**Muhammad Ali Khan Pushkumia, 93, 154**  
**Muhammad Khan, 101**  
**Muhammad Shah, raja, 71, 90, 93, 100, 101, 146, 160, 162**  
**Muhammad Tughlak, 29**  
**Muhammad Tegh Singh, raja, 48-52**  
**Mukhtar Munshi, 102**  
**Mulbe, Mulbye, Mulbid, 79, 80, 145**  
**Multan, 21, 24, 39**  
**Munshi-din-Muhammad, 111, 138**  
**Murad, 70**  
**Musalman, 120**  
**Muslim, 27, 30, 37, 48, 67, 68, 124, 188**  
**Mutsaddi wazir, 157**

- Nadaun, 21  
Nadir Shah's invasion, 37  
Nagar, 146  
Nagarkot or Kangra, 18-21, 24, 27, 28, 32  
Nam-gyal, 67  
Namyika pass, 61  
Nanda, 79  
Nao-Nihal Singh 108  
Napoleon, 185  
Narainia mian 154  
Naris, M-Nah-Ris, 57, 62, 120  
Nasirud-din-Sabuktgin of Ghazana, 23  
Nayagul, 20  
Nepal, 74, 78, 105, 107, 110, 112, 113, 114, 141, 118, 121, 134, 139, 117, 148, 152, 165-167, 174, 176, 178  
Neurangahills, 161  
Ngari-Pushm, 104, 114, 116, 117, 119-121, 160  
Ngorub-Standzin, 77, 85, 86  
Ngo-trup-ten-zin, Dngos-grub-bstan-dzin, 82  
Niali, 162  
Nidhan Singh kardar, 86, 95  
Nihal Singh Bakshi, 154  
Nimamut, 141  
Nira Bridge, 61  
Nono-Sodnam, Nono Bsodnams, 119-121, 123, 128, 129, 133, 134  
Nubra, river, 54, 55, 57, 58, 69, 102  
Nurla, 61  
Nurpur, 30-32, 34, 35, 38, 182  
Nyimo, 61  
Nyoma, 69  
Ohind, 23, 24  
Opium war, 165, 179  
Padam, 60  
Paddar, 34, 40, 85, 86  
Padma-Tanying, 66  
Pahlad Dev, 23  
Pakistan, 32  
Palahi, 31  
Pal-gyi-gon, 67  
Palam, 21  
Pal kings, 25  
Pallock, general, 147  
Pandvas, 31  
Pangachi, 60  
Pangi, 34  
Pang Kong lake, 54, 58, 62, 114, 119, 121, 155  
Panjab, 23, 25, 28, 29, 31, 37, 71, 82, 103, 104, 106, 108-114, 130, 135, 165, 181  
Panjshir, 31  
Para river, 59  
Paras Ram, raja of Jammu hills, 29  
Parkuta, 89, 98, 99  
Partap Rai, Dev, from Jasrota, 29, 33  
Partap Singh, raja of Kishtwar, 48  
Partap Singh Varma, raja of Chamba, 33  
Parri Khar, 145  
Paskum, Pashkam, Pashkum, 59, 60, 74, 77, 78, 80, 101, 145, 154, 163  
Pathankot-Nurpur State, Paithan, 20, 27, 29, 31, 32, 182  
Patti Bhoti, 40, 46  
Patwari at Biyans, 131  
Pauna, 28  
Payenda Khan, 150  
Pehalwan Singh Commandant, 138, 144, 145, 154  
Pekin, 64, 115  
Persian and Turkey letters, 35, 159, 160, 164

## 214 *Indian Conquest of the Himalayan Territories*

- Peshawar, 23, 24, 31, 42, 104-106, 111, 112, 146-151, 158, 181  
Photo-la, 58, 61'  
Pi-Hsi, Tibetan general, 122, 123, 127, 128, 132, 139, 142, 143, 155  
Pin, 176  
Pitik, 61  
Piti, 63  
Porgyal, 115  
Prithvi Chander—the lord of Trigarta, 22  
Prithvi Singh, raja of Nurpur, 31, 33, 34  
Punch, 19, 39, 40  
Purab Chand, 32  
Puranas, 21  
Purang, Pui ren, Poorungz, Dzong, a small town, 66, 67, 69, 115, 116, 119, 122, 123, 130, 137  
Purbiah Platoon, 150  
Purig, 40, 58, 59, 61, 68-70, 75, 76, 80, 85-87, 94, 101, 145  
Purik, 55, 58  
  
Qandahar, 31  
Qasim Khan, 29  
Qazi Nadir Shah, 157  
Quebec, 100  
  
Ragesh Kahlon, Tibetan General, 154, 155, 156, 157  
Ragunath Singh, 35  
Rahim Khan, Kahlon of Chachot, 79, 85, 101, 123  
Rahim Khan, raja of Takcha, 163  
Rai Bhan, 48  
Rai Bhupat Jamwal, 34  
Rai Balbhadar from Lakhapur, 29  
Rai Bhim, 28  
Rai Kishan Chand, 160, 170  
Rai Singh Mian, Jamadar, 75, 86, 134, 135, 137, 153  
Rajatarangini, 19, 2, 22, 25, 26, 33  
Rajouri, Rajapuri. 18, 19, 28, 36, 39  
Rajput, Rajas, Principalities, 19, 31, 43, 48, 49, 108  
Rajrup, 39, 31  
Raj Singh Raja, 35  
Rakastal, 184  
Ramban, 47  
Ramdeo Rathor, king of Kanauj, 19  
Ramgarh, 29, 39, 46  
Ramgaria Sirdars, 36  
Ramjimal Munshi, Lala, 154, 155  
Ramnagar, 37, 38, 53, 60  
Ram Singh Bhayyia, 38, 112  
Ranas, 20  
Ranjit Dev, Maharaja of Jammu, 29, 36, 37, 49, 53  
Ranjitgarh, 37  
Ranjit Singh, Maharaja, 35, 38, 39, 42, 49, 50, 52, 71-74, 78, 81, 82, 88, 90, 91, 104-108, 112, 117, 138, 164, 166  
Rao Udiya, Rai, of Dhamriwal, 28  
Rassul Beg, Mirza, 75, 101  
Ratnu Wazir, Mian, 42, 62, 150-151, 153, 155, 158, 161  
Ravi, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 31-33, 35, 74  
Rawal, 118, 123  
Rawan Hard, 119, 128  
Raz-Chak Garpon, 155  
Rdarje-Rgyal-Rnyam, Dorje-Nam-Gyal, 76-79  
Rezia Beg, Mughal Governor, 34  
Riasi, 19, 34, 36, 38, 39, 44-46, 52, 188  
Rohtak, 23  
Rohtang, 57  
Ron-Chu-Rgud, 76

- Rondu, 89, 94, 98, 100, 101, 146, 162, 163  
Rudok, Rudokh, 54, 58, 62, 67-69, 104, 114-119, 121-124, 128, 138-140, 154, 155 167  
Rukshu, Rukchu, 55, 58-61, 114  
Russi Pass, 76  
Russian and Iranian Sympathy, 105
- Saiadat Yar Khan, raja, 49  
Sa—be, 120  
Sahajapala, raja, lord of Vartule, 26  
Sahila-Varma, great king of Chamba, 17, 22, 23  
Saif-ulla-khan, 49  
Saj-Joth, 60  
Sakya, 68  
Salam Khan, raja of Saut, 163  
Salam Khan Kiladar, 77  
Salim Shah Sur, 28  
Salvahana Varma, ruler of Chamba, 25  
Samba, 19, 29, 33, 35, 52  
Samarta, 40  
Sangram Dev, raja of Jammu, 29  
Sangram Dev, brother of Partap Dev of Jasrota, 33  
Sangram pal, raja of Basohli, 34  
Sanguli, 174  
Sansar Chand Katoch, raja of Kangra, 27, 38  
Sansar Chand Rai from Pauna, 28  
Sant, 74, 163  
Sardul Singh Commandant, 154, 155  
Satadru, 32  
Sat-par, nullah, 162  
Saumatika, Saumatikas, or people of Balor, 17, 18, 22  
Saut, 94, 145  
Sawanmal, Dewan, 112  
Sayyid, forces, 27, 28  
Sbalti-yul, 76, 143  
Sechwan, 65  
Seuji-la, Zojila pass, 55, 61  
Sewan, namgyal, raja of Timbus, 163  
Shah-Alam II, Mughal Emperor, 36  
Shah-Jahan, Mughal Emperor, 30, 31  
Shahpur, 31  
Shah-Shuja-ul-mulk, refugee king of Kabul, 50, 105, 110, 111, 146  
Shakargarh, 36  
Shakhar, Shag-mkhar, 76, 77  
Shalkur, 167, 172  
Sha'm, the lower Ladakh, 143  
Shang-shang, 152  
Shankra-Varman, the king of Kashmir, 22, 23  
Shash Fateh, 27  
Sheikh Sodagar, 42  
Sheikh-mohi-ud-din, Gulam, 42, 150, 170  
Sher Ali Khan, raja of Khartaksho, 97, 98, 102  
Shergol, Sar-Sgo-la, 76, 80  
Sher Shah Suri, 28  
Sher Singh, prince, Governor of Kashmir, Maharaja, 90, 104, 106, 109-113, 145, 150, 167, 169, 170, 180  
Sher Singh Jandiala 106  
Shigar, Shanghu, 89, 95, 100, 146, 160-162  
Shikarpur, 107  
Shiwalik hills, 22, 26, 33, 43  
Shyok, 57, 58, 69, 89  
Sialkot, 36  
Siba, 20, 32, 35  
Sibaran Chand, Chief of Guler, 32  
Sikander Shah Sur, 28, 30

- Sikander, king of Kashmir, 67
- Sikh, Sardar, misls, kingdom, 31, 36-41, 49, 50, 71-75, 81-83, 85, 90, 92, 102-108, 111-112, 114, 117, 118, 123, 130, 137-142, 148-153, 157, 158, 164, 165, 167-173, 175-178, 180, 181
- Simla states, 105, 167
- Sind, 73, 107
- Sindhanwalia Sardar, 113
- Singge-la, 58, 61, 70
- Singhe-mankotia, 75
- Singge-namgyal, 68, 114, 116
- Sinh-ka-bab, the Indus, 56, 63, 115
- Sino-Nepali co-operation against the Dogra, 179
- Sirmur, 142
- Skardu, Iskardu, 89-91, 94, 97-102, 114, 120, 133, 146, 147, 152, 157, 160-163, 165, 186
- Skirmish, 153
- Sod, Sa-phud, 59, 75, 77, 82, 83
- Sokpo, 62
- Soma-Varma, 17, 25
- Soraj, 49
- Spiti, 54-60, 66, 67, 69, 70, 84, 87, 115, 123, 138, 141, 142, 153, 176
- Srinagar, 82, 150, 172
- Sruinsar, 60
- Stog, 77, 84, 102, 160
- Sucheta thanadar, 153
- Suchet Singh mian, 40
- Suchet Singh raja, 42, 52, 109
- Sujanpur, 32
- Sujan Singh, raja, 49
- Sukarchakia, 36
- Su-ka-mir, 86, 87
- Suket, 20, 32, 33
- Sukhjiwan, raja, Afghan governor, 49
- Sulaiman Khan, raja of Shigar, 146, 160, 162
- Sultan beg, wazir, 98
- Sultan Muhammad Khan, 110
- Sum-gal, 59
- Sumgiel, 63
- Sunku, 76
- Suri, Sultans, 30, 34
- Suru, 58-60, 75-78, 82, 83, 86, 93-95, 145, 163
- Surkhang Kahlon, 125, 127, 128, 133, 138
- Susarman, the king of Trigarta, 21, 24
- Sussal, 18, 26
- Sutlej, trans, 19, 20, 22, 27-29, 32, 55, 57, 63, 74, 104, 105, 109, 115, 167, 169, 175, 184
- Swat, 65
- Tabo, 87
- Takch, 163
- Taklakot, Taklagarh, Taklakhar, Daglakar, 121-124, 126-130, 132, 133, 135-139, 166, 176, 178
- Tanduff Namgyal Gyalpo, 102, 143
- Tang-Mogong, 65, 143
- Ta-pa-Ko-Erh, Daba, 122
- Taragarh, 30
- Tarikh-i-Panjab, 36
- Tashigon, Tashigong, 63, 69, 104, 115, 121, 152, 157
- Tatar Khan, 29, 30
- Tegh Singh Subadar, 138, 144, 154
- Tekhar, in Rajauri hills, 28
- Tek-tek-mu, 161
- Thalaura, 60
- Thakur, 20, 26, 49
- Thale-wasalaturu nullah, 162
- Thamokhon, 97, 98, 100
- Thasgam, 154

- Thi-Sultans, 75, 76, 79  
 Tholing, 62, 115, 120, 139  
 Thung-Lung pass, 59  
 Tibet, Western, Tibetan, Empire,  
 43, 46, 53-55, 59, 60, 62-66, 68-  
 70, 74, 88, 92, 102, 104, 106,  
 107, 111-114, 116-143, 145, 146,  
 148, 149, 152, 154-158, 160,  
 164-174, 176, 178-182, 184-188  
 Tieh-wa, Dögra Commander, 156  
 Timbus, 74, 163  
 Timur, 72  
 Tinga-pöns, 127  
 Tirathpuri, Tang-la, 119, 123, 124,  
 129, 130  
 Tog, 76  
 Tok, 85  
 Tolti, 89, 98, 100, 102, 162  
 Tomar rajas, 29, 32  
 To-yo, 131, 137, 138, 144, 181  
 Trägarta, Kingdom, 53  
 Tra-shi Namgyal, 67  
 Treaty of Sagauli, 105  
 Trigada, Trigadh, Trigär, 20  
 Trikot, 19, 33  
 Triloknäth, 90  
 Tripartite treaty of 1839, 92, 105,  
 106  
 Tsang, 68, 127  
 Tsa-mountain, 123  
 Tsa-Parang, Tsa-rän, 115, 120, 121,  
 123, 138-140  
 Tse-Brtan, 87  
 Tse-pal-nam-gyal, 71, 74, 80, 81,  
 84  
 Tse-wang-raftan, gonpo, 143  
 Tse-wang-nam-gyal, 67, 68  
 Tsho-Kar, 58, 59  
 Tsumur or Chumri or Chamra, 83  
 Tsurul, bitter, 62  
 Tun-sa-lung valley, 136  
 Turkestan, 65  
 Turki Shahi, 23, 24  
 Turushkas, Turkas, 23, 24  
 Tuta mian, 75, 86  
 Udabhandapura, 23  
 Udham Singh Mian, 85  
 Udai Singh, Raja, 35  
 Udaiya Varma, 26  
 Uggar Singh, 35  
 Ujh Valley, 33  
 Umasi Laor-Burdar pass, 60  
 Undes or Hundes, 125  
 Urasa, Hazara, 18  
 Uri, 150  
 Utpala, king of Khi-de-nyi-ma-gon,  
 67  
 Uttam Singh Sirdar, 75  
 Uttamapraja, Ruler of Kishtwar, 17  
 Uzbeks, 31  
 Vajra Dhara, Lord of Babbapura,  
 26  
 Vanko pass, 98  
 Vansavali, 21, 22  
 Vartule, 26  
 Vazir, 64  
 Ventura general, 112, 188  
 Virat, the kings of Matsyas, 21  
 Waka-chu, 59-61  
 Wanko-la, 96  
 Wanla, 54, 61  
 Yakhair, 187  
 Yarkand, 93, 103, 104, 114, 116,  
 148, 162, 165, 167  
 Yis-nal-mir of Chigtan, 87  
 Yostrung-karim, 94, 98, 99, 146  
 Yuan-Chwang, 54

**218 *Indian Conquest of Himalayan Territories***

- Yumnan, 65**  
**Yusufzais, 39**  
**Yuvarajas of Trigarta, 26**  
**Zafarnama, 18**  
**Zafarwal, 36**  
**Zainul-Abidin, 67**  
**Zangs-kar, Zangs-d-kar, Copper  
white, 58**  
**Zanskar, 40, 50, 55, 58-61, 66, 67,  
83, 84, 86, 93, 94, 101, 157, 163**
- Zi-zi, 79**  
**Zoorkung, Zoorking, 151, 155, 159**  
**Zonekar, 69**  
**Zorawar Singh, general, wazir,  
Dogra, 40-45, 52, 53, 60-62, 75-  
89, 92-103, 106, 111, 113, 114,  
116-121, 123-125, 128-141, 143,  
144, 146-148, 155-157, 162-164,  
166-177, 179-182, 184-188**















